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AUTHORS: Hakan BASPINAR

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LIBYA: POLITICS & ENERGY

Hakan Başpınar

INTRODUCTION

The developments in Libya is in need to be closely watched to explain the oil problem especially the reasons for the developments in this geography for contemporary Africa and Middle East conjuncture. The revolution that resulted in the overthrow of the Muammar Gaddafi regime has filled the 6th anniversary on February 17, 2017, which emerged from Tunisia starting in December 2010 and in 2011, we saw consequences in Egypt and later in Libya. Despite the fact that six years have passed since the revolution in Libya, the causes of devolution aren't remedied and the aims of the revolution aren't realized. In order for the construction of the state and the security of the society to be achieved, it is necessary for all parties affected by this revolution to be reconciled.

In this study, the process of revolution will be examined by way of political and social elements of Libya. Also the energy sources of Libya will be mentioned and the cause of revolution will be stated. In addition, this study will be dwell on relations between Turkey and Libya, and between Libya and External Powers.

REVOLUTION PROCESS IN LIBYA

If we briefly look at the emergence of the revolution in Libya, the first pre-revolutionary turmoil in Libya emerged in January 2011. The reason for this confusion is not political but economic concerns in the first instance. Later in February, when hundreds of Libyans were gathered in front of the police station in Benghazi to demonstrate, it was made politicized. Gaddafi and the security forces reacted very harsh to the demonstration, and the turned into an anti-regime actions of Libyan people. The situation made Gaddafi use enormous power to suppress the actions and the demonstrations had become a civil war.

High inflation rates caused by increasing food and housing prices, coupled with the unbalanced distribution of income, led to a deterioration of living conditions for many Libyan families and unskilled foreign laborers. Libyans were particularly frustrated over the decrease in living standards, while the country had generated billions of dollars from hydrocarbon exports, many of which had been spent on Gadhafi's foreign policy adventures of fighting imperialism or the unification of Africa. Ordinary citizens argued that a country rich in energy resources, with a relatively small population, should be able to offer high living standards to its population, in the same manner as in the rich

Gulf States.¹ The beginning of the revolution was that the Libyan people began to feel uncomfortable with the administration. They began to compare their governments with the Gulf countries which has also petrol resources.

Conflict against Gaddafi was not a real power struggle between tribes. Mobilization of the revolutionary militias largely occurred on the basis of towns and cities rather than tribes/families even though the distinction between local and tribal ties was very complex in many cases especially in the smaller towns. Due to their skill and experience as producers of order and conflict mediators based on customary tribal law, tribal politicians have come to play a dominant role in the local transitional councils and the city-based military councils.²

The primacy of protecting civilian lives was propagated throughout the Libyan conflict, this interpretation ignores NATO's pursuit of a political objective, which, at times, undermined its mandate to protect civilians. NATO used more than 200 cruise missiles and 20,000 bombs in its operation in Libya, including non-military targets, to support the groups that would ascertain their political and commercial interests in the oil rich nation. Human Rights Watch stated that NATO's actions directly resulted in more than 70 confirmed civilian deaths, including women and children.

LIBYA'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The social structure of Libya is one of the most important reasons why Libya is so influential in shaping the developments in this geography, which brought Muammar Gaddafi to power and ended his rule. Tribes are the main components of social structure in Libya and the majority of the population belongs to those tribes. Muammar Gaddafi regime was built on alliances with tribes rather than political alliances. This situation has been a milestone both during the Gaddafi regime and in the post-revolutionary politics. In this direction, some tribal leaders and militia forces, who are close to the regions with rich oil deposits in Libya, began to ask for after the 2011 revolution.

Trilemma is dominant in Libya's political structure. The existing political situation in Libya is described by three oppositional factors: Islam, democracy, and shadow state. These factors, composing a trilemma, could seem to be incompatible with one another, and the renouncing of, at least, one of them seems inescapable. In its simplest terms, the events in Libya consist of conflicts between Islam, democracy and the shadow state. The concept of shadow state has been used because foreign powers in Libyan territory produced a conflict in domination of the country and foreign powers had to build autonomous authorities in Libya by making use of the social structure in this region.

Although tribes undoubtedly have strong relevance in today's Libya, this must not be over-estimated. Libya is divided into 140 main tribes, but only 30-40 of them are influential, playing an important socio-economic and political role. In particular, this happens

1 Mohammed El-Katiri, "State-Building Challenges in a Post-Revolution Libya", Strategic Studies Institute, October, 2012, s.8.

2 Wolfram Lacher, "Families, Tribes and Cities in the Libyan Revolution", Middle East Policy Council, <http://www.mepc.org/families-tribes-and-cities-libyan-revolution> (accessed: 10.05.2017)

in the greater Tripoli area and to some extent also in Benghazi, where the bulk of the Libyan population living under the influence of the tribes is rather limited. Nevertheless they are still an important factor outside the large cities mentioned above, and above all in the rather remote areas of the east, southern Cyrenaica, southern Tripolitania and the Fezzan. More than 90% of Libyans consider themselves to be Arab or an ethnic mix of Arab and Berber. Other ethnicities include the previously nomadic Tuareg and Tebu tribes in the south and the Berbers (Amazighs).³

The notion of qabila (tribe) in Libya could be explained as a various social organization form. Because in Libya, people respect their tribes. That's why their tribes determine everything about people who is incidental to them such as behavior, political side, vision of world and opinion. Tribal culture includes moral judgments, honors, shames, and concrete procedures in Libya's social structure. The tribes form their own rules and laws. These laws and rules might be different between the tribes.

Gadhafi had integrated a large part of his own tribe, the Ghaddafa, as well as the Warfalla tribe (Libya's largest tribe with an estimated two million people) and the Maghara (the tribe Gadhafi married into) into top positions within the government and the military. Gadhafi had to leverage the Maghara and Warfalla tribes during his rule, as historically, the Warfalla tribe not only outweighed the Ghaddafa tribe in prominence and resources, but also maintained power relations in the new domination; the Warfalla historically employed the Ghaddafa to look over resources and cattle.⁴

Tribal institutions are playing an important role in providing order during the protracted political vacuum. Election, which made in July 2012, gave tribes the possibility to be represented in the new democratic structure. Because of that most of the elected independents represent the interests of individual cities, tribes or families.

At the moment, Libyan Trilemma have no solution as there seems to be no solution for the Libyan Trilemma. Libya is probably doomed to remain a "hybrid country" for some years to come. Probably, the strongest factor among the three mentioned above, is the one of being a relevant rentier state. In regard to the other two elements, Islam and democracy, the result of their confrontation will moderately depend on the decisions assumed by tribal society.⁵

3 S. Tarkowski Tempelhof, M. Omar, "Stakeholders of Libya's February 17 Revolution", USAIP(United State Institute of Peace), Special Report 300, January 2012, s.8-9.

4 Larbi Sadiki, "Wither Arab 'Republicanism?' The Rise of Family Rule and the 'End of Democratization' in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen," *Mediterranean Politics* 15, no. 1, 2010, s.99–107.

5 Arturo Varvelli, "The Role of Tribal Dynamics in the Libyan Future", ISPI(International Society for Performance Improvement), Analysis No.172, May,2013, s.10.

http://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_172_2013.pdf
(accessed: 22.05.2017)

ENERGY RESOURCES

Libya's has coasts to the Mediterranean such as its neighbors Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, Chad, Egypt and Sudan have. Libya has the largest surface area after Sudan, Algeria and the Congo in Africa. Libya has a population of over 6 million. Libya has petroleum which is valuable because of its high quality and low cost of extraction and 40% of the reserves large natural gas reserves in Africa.

Other than Petrol resource, American and European multinational corporations' intention to confiscate water source. Nubian underground water layer formed colossal fossil water reserve which is underlying Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Chad. Possibilities offered by this reserve, millions of cubic meters of water extracted from 1,300 wells along the length of 1600 km from the desert to coastal cities and by being transported by built aqueducts and making the desert land productive. It was put forward by the Libyan State.

According to a Libyan oil source and local official, Libya's 300,000 barrels per day Sharara oilfield and 90,000 bpd El Feel oilfield have restarted after the end of protests that had blocked pipelines there.

In December 2014 and January 2016, militia forces attacked the country's largest oil export port, Sidra. These attacks have seriously affected the production and export of oil in the country. The people of Libya were very disturbed that the production and administration of petroleum were in the hands of the militia forces.

When we arrived in March 2017, General Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army, took back Sidra and Ras Lanuf oil ports, which have Libya's 60% oil export capacity, from the Benghazi Defense Brigade in Benghazi.

Libyan crude production stood at 491,000 bpd on Thursday, but the OPEC member was targeting 800,000 bpd soon and 1 million to 1.1 million bpd by August, the chairman of state oil firm NOC (National Oil Corporation) said on the sidelines of an industry event in Paris.⁶

In general, the economy depends on oil and natural gas as Libya has proven 42 billion barrels of crude oil and 1505 trillion cubic meters of natural gas reserves. Before the crisis that began after the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in the country; oil production, which was 1 million 700 thousand barrels per day, has declined to 700 thousand after the crisis.

Also Libya has the fourth largest natural gas reserve in Africa. With an annual output of close to 590 billion cubic meters, it accounts for 0,8% of world gas consumption. After the establishment of the Greenstream Pipeline, the prosperity of Libya's natural gas has gained more importance for European states. French Total, British BP, Lasmo, Exxon Mobil, Italian ENI group, American Occidental, Russian Rosneft, Spanish Repsol, Austrian OMV and Swedish Lundin oil companies have won important contracts in Libya.

Libya has Africa's largest oil reserves country. Oil is the lifeblood of the Libyan econ-

⁶ Julia Simon, "Oil prices fall more than 1 pct after Libyan oil fields restart", 27 April 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/27/reuters-america-update-7-oil-prices-fall-more-than-1-pct-after-libyan-oilfields-restart.html> (accessed: 25.05.2017)

omy and 80% of the country's income comes from oil exports. Before the 2011 revolution, Libya was producing about 1.6 million barrels of oil a day. The environment of conflict emerging with the revolution almost stopped all of the country's exports. Because the country's economy depends on oil exports, economic deterioration with the revolution distorted the balance of domestic payments and caused deficit of employment.

For the first time since December 2014, Libyan crude oil production has topped 760,000 barrels per day (bpd). The three-year high has largely been driven by the re-opening of the Murzuq Basin's El Sharara and Elephant fields, which contribute an estimated 280,000 bpd of output. Following this latest uptick in production, many investors are left pondering whether Libya's crude oil sector is about to settle down into a more stable and predictable production rhythm, or whether this latest development merely represents yet another false start for the troubled North African state.⁷

RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

Turkey has deep rooted relations with the Libyan people. Due to its historical and cultural bonds, Turkey attaches utmost importance to the security and welfare of the Libyan people. Following the Revolution of 17 February 2011, Turkey recognized the National Transitional Council as the "sole representative of Libyan people". Turkey has been the first country to appoint an Ambassador to Tripoli on 2 September 2011, after the full control of Tripoli by the National Transitional Council.

When we look at the revolutionary process, even Turkey-Libyan relations contained largely economic relations at the time of the overthrown leader Muhammad Gaddafi, who ruled Libya between 1969 and 2011, Turkey have attitude friendly behavior to Libya during revolution and after revolution.⁸

In line with the urgent priorities of Libya, Turkey has contributed to institution building efforts in Libya, particularly in the fields of security and economic recovery. Nevertheless, in 2014, assistance programs led by Turkey have been suspended, due to deteriorating security situation in the country.

Due to the same reasons, Turkish Consulate General in Benghazi has temporarily been closed on 14 June 2014. Turkish Embassy in Tripoli is also not operational since 25 July 2014. On the other hand, Turkish Consulate in Misrata continues its operations.

Turkey has actively supported the Libyan political dialogue process facilitated by the United Nations throughout 2015. Turkey has engaged with all sides in Libya in order to encourage them to join the political process and come out with a mutually acceptable agreement. Turkey has closely followed meetings of the political dialogue participants and hosted various meetings of Libyan stakeholders.

7 James Appleyard, "Libyan crude production rebounds, but for how long?", 4 May 2017, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/libyan-crude-production-rebounds-how-long-james-appleyard> (accessed: 17.05.2017)

8 Emrah Kekilli, "Türkiye-Libya İlişkileri Kriz Alanları ve İş Birliği İmkanları", SETA Analysis, 2017, No: 191, s:8

Turkey has welcomed the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement on 17 December 2015, which offers a clear framework for long-lasting peace and stability in Libya. Mr. Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, took part at the signing ceremony held in Skhirat, Morocco. Turkey supports the Government of National Accord in its endeavors to effectively implement the Libyan Political Agreement. Maintaining close cooperation with the new Libyan authorities, Turkey will resume assistance programs in coordination with the Government of National Accord, once the security situation on the ground allows.

The United Nations-backed, internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) struggled in 2016 to assert itself in the capital Tripoli, as two authorities—one also based in Tripoli and another in eastern Libya—continued to compete for legitimacy and control over resources and infrastructure.⁹

Forces aligned with all governments and dozens of militias continued to clash, exacerbating a humanitarian crisis with close to half-a-million internally displaced people. The civilian population struggled to gain access to basic services such as healthcare, fuel, and electricity.

Militias and armed forces affiliated with the two governments engaged in arbitrary detentions, torture, unlawful killings, indiscriminate attacks, abductions, and forcible disappearances. Criminal gangs and militias abducted politicians, journalists, and civilians—including children—for political and monetary gain. The domestic criminal justice system remained dysfunctional, offering no prospects for accountability, while the International Criminal Court (ICC), despite having jurisdiction over Libya provided by the UN Security Council, failed to open any new investigation into ongoing crimes.

The United States, United Kingdom, France, and the United Arab Emirates reportedly expanded their military activities in Libya to support forces in fighting extremists in Sirte and Benghazi. These countries were using the mask “fighting extremism”. In fact they were manipulating relations between people of Libyan and exploiting them.

According to Human Right Watch: “The Islamic State (also known as ISIS) lost control over large parts of its self-proclaimed capital in Sirte, where it had been based since June 2015, and remained embroiled in fighting with Libyan and foreign forces. ISIS groups summarily executed people for alleged witchcraft and “treason” and imposed a severe and restrictive interpretation of Sharia law in areas under their control.”

Tens of thousands of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees from Africa and the Middle East transited through Libya on their way to Europe, with at least 4,518 drowning or going missing while crossing the Mediterranean in unsafe vessels. While in Libya, armed groups and guards at migrant detention facilities subjected many to forced labor, torture, sexual abuse, and extortion.

According to news of Al Arabiya; Libyan army spokesman Colonel Ahmed al-Mesmari said that Qatar, Sudan and Turkey as “the triad of terrorism” in Libya”. He strengthen his claim with this sentence: The evidence confirms that a number of Qatari aircraft are regularly landing in Libya in 2017 to support terrorist groups.”

9 “Libya Events of 2016”, Human Right Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/libya> (accessed: 24.05.2017)

GLOBAL ACTORS

Since 2011, there has been political upheavals and violent struggles in Libya. While this struggle is costing Libya more than it could have imagined, the western powers in contrast appear willing to witness the Libyan tragedy horribly unfold. The NATO intervention was a realist move that unleashed forces and dynamics that have resulted in an ongoing political and military struggle and the destabilization of the state.

Colonel Gaddafi had a well-documented tense relationship with the Western powers and their multinational companies. Once Gaddafi was ousted, Western financial interests would be in a prime position to benefit from a liberalized economic system. Indeed, the National Transitional Council said that it intends to reward countries that supported its fight. British Defense Secretary Philip Hammond urged companies to “pack their suitcases” and head to Libya, prompting some to posit that the “starting pistol” for Libya’s resources has been fired. Moreover, Hammond stated that while much of Libya lay in ruins, “great care had been taken” to avoid destroying critical infrastructure necessary for commercial operations. These financial interests were not merely reacting to new business opportunities; rather, Libya’s “coming bonanza” was an ongoing topic amongst transnational economic networks well before the regime collapsed. Economist Joseph Stiglitz implicitly concurs with a Marxist interpretation of the use of force to open previously closed markets. He states that the US has adopted “an increasingly hard-powered economic agenda,” noting “America’s international political economy was driven by a whole variety of special interests which saw the opportunity to force other countries to open their markets to its goods on its terms”. As such, the Libyan conflict was a result of capitalist interests seeking to upend the Libyan political system to benefit particular upper-class interests.

Nearly six years after the fall of the Gaddafi regime, questions endure regarding the reasons for NATO’s decision to intervene. Empirical evidence suggests a political objective superseded humanitarian considerations. A liberal interpretation arguing for the primacy of human rights cannot account for NATO’s conduct during the conflict. But on the ground assessing the real intentions of western powers, provide intriguing evidences for the primacy of political motivations. Nevertheless, normatively, humanitarian intervention was not intended to be a shortcut to regime change. Taylor B. Seybolt makes an important point about that: “humanitarian intervention might be less likely in future situations where civilians truly need help if the claim of humanitarian motives is doubted because of past misuse.”

The United States, European Union, and regional states all played significant roles in the armed conflicts occurring in Libya. The US, France, and United Kingdom reportedly participated in military activities in support of Libyan forces against militant groups, most notably ISIS in Sirte and Benghazi.

Efforts to reach a political settlement between warring factions, led by the UN envoy to Libya Martin Kobler, and backed by members of the international community most notably the US, UK, France, and Italy, failed to achieve the desired results as parties remained engaged in hostilities, competing for legitimacy.

On March 8, the UN Panel of Experts on Libya, established pursuant to UN Security

Council resolution 1973 (2011), issued its final report which said that several countries, individuals, and companies were responsible for violations of the arms embargo against Libya. According to the report, the UAE, Egypt, Ukraine and Sudan have all violated the arms embargo against Libya since 2011, by transferring weapons, ammunitions, aircraft or armored vehicles to the conflict parties.¹⁰

Also in March, a leaked document revealed that British Special Forces had been actively fighting extremist groups in Libya since January. In July, France announced that three of its soldiers were killed in Libya after a helicopter crashed during an intelligence-gathering operation. In August, the US expanded its air campaign in Libya, at the request of the GNA, to include targets in the ISIS stronghold of Sirte.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report in February documenting widespread violations and abuses committed in Libya since 2014 that included unlawful killings; indiscriminate attacks; torture and ill treatment; arbitrary detention; abductions and disappearances; and violations against women, journalists, human rights defenders, migrants, and children.

Despite a recommendation by the High Commissioner that the Human Rights Council consider establishing an independent expert mandate on Libya to report on the human rights situation and progress towards accountability, the council's resolution only requested a further report from the high commissioner in March 2017. In a September update, the high commissioner's office reported to the council that the situation has not improved and that impunity prevails, and reiterated the recommendation that the council create an independent expert mandate.

The UN Security Council extended for another 12 months in March an arms embargo on Libya. In June, the council unanimously authorized the inspection of vessels off Libyan high seas in an effort to crackdown on illicit weapons smuggling. The council also passed a resolution in July that authorized moving Libya's category 2 chemical weapons out of the country and destroying them. In October, the council renewed its authorization for the interdiction of vessels used for smuggling migrants on the high seas off the coast of Libya.

When we look at Human Right Watch report, The Rule of Law and Human Rights division at UNSMIL (UN Support Mission in Libya), which operates from Tunis and visits Libya only rarely due to security concerns, scaled down its public reporting on human rights violations. However, in March, it started producing a monthly bulletin on civilian casualties in Libya.

In June, the EU extended its anti-smuggling naval operation in the central Mediterranean, Operation Sophia, to include training for the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy. In July, NATO committed to supporting Operation Sophia by providing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, as well as capacity-building for the Libyan coastguard and navy.

As a result, Libya is a chess board today and players are not strange to us. We had seen them at First World War and later on the Second World War. However, the war notion

10 "Libya Events of 2016", Human Right Watch, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/libya> (accessed: 24.05.2017)

has a bit changed today, key players are using some groups in Libya to fight for their own way.

The Tripoli government, which was recognized by the UN in the region and led by Prime Minister Fayeze Al Sarraj, is supported by Qatar and Turkey. The Libyan Political Agreement, signed in Morocco in December 2015 under the auspices of Russia, Egypt, France and the United Arab Emirates, provided a temporary peaceful atmosphere in Libya. But this peaceful atmosphere wasn't long. Haftar strengthened and rejected Fayeze Al Sarraj's administration. Russia wants to be indispensable in the region by trying to establish a negotiation environment between Sarraj and Haftar.

In February 2017, a meeting was held in London between Libyan National Oil Company Director Mustafa Sanalla and Russia's Rosneft Director Igor Sechin. In the context of this meeting, a co-operation agreement was signed under which new investments in oil production and new capacity-building measures after the revolution. This deal is the first foreign investment agreement of Libya since 2011. At the meeting, Sanalla stated that until the end of this year, oil production could reach an estimated 1.25 million barrels per day. Russia has increased its effectiveness in Libya with this cooperation agreement. Russia wants to play an active role in the region by acting as a mediator in ensuring political stability in the region.

In May 2017, Fayeze Al Sarraj and Khalifa Haftar came together in Abu Dhabi under the mediation of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. Opinions were presented for a permanent agreement in Libya and for the end of the conflicts. Decisions were made on the formation of a three-person presidency council, the unification of the army's command, the introduction of a ban on some Islamic militants, and the presidential election will be made within a few months. Despite these decisions, the chaos environment still exists in the country and the environment of insecurity among the groups continues.

Khalifa Haftar who is head of Libyan National Army, is supported especially by Russia and the changing conjuncture the United Kingdom, Egypt and the USA. By playing the role of referee in Libya, Russia hopes for political and financial gains in the long run in the form of lucrative contracts and loyalty of any new Libyan government. By partnering with Haftar, Russia accomplishes a number of its goals, from expanding its influence in the Mediterranean and engaging Egypt more intensively, to acquiring another bargaining chip in its relations with Western counterparts.

Russia would arguably prefer a strong military figure who can channel its interests, such as Haftar, to play an important role in any future Libyan government. For that to take place; however, it needs to bring all sides to the meeting, and obtain what Western powers have thus far failed to achieve: pressuring competing Libyan factions into a compromise that produces a legitimate, national government recognized by all sides.

Sergey Markov who is director of Russian Institute of Political Studies talked to Al Jazeera News Agency: "Libya is a camp for Russia's confrontation against NATO. Toppling the former regime has been a foolish move that has sent into motion the collapse of all the states in the North African continent. Russia has considered this an act of aggression." We see in Libya, secret deputation war. Libya has become a struggle area for international great powers.

CONCLUSION

If we analyze the process of existed policy in Libya, we notice that the main reason of the intervention is the natural resources of the country like oil and natural gas. Old leader Kaddafi was dominant power over lots of natural reserves, which had disturbed western countries. Thus, the western countries had supported some militias in the country on the way to the revolution against Kaddafi.

Those reasons mentioned above, location of the country in the continent and activity of native tribes shows us why Libya went into such chaos. At one hand, there is the uncompromising attitude of the tribes and powerful western actors on the other hand.

Tribes have been quite influential in reshaping of Libya's current history. Both pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary tribes in Libya were influential in Libyan politics, which, in turn, made Libya vulnerable to the separatist activities of foreign powers. Western powers have pursued a policy of influencing and reshaping process in Libya more actively. Western countries want to be active in Libya, which has rich energy resources that smelled of oil and natural gas to the Westerners.

As a result, all factors are hindering Libya to keep out of chaos and reach the stability for 6 years. Western powers know very well how to confuse countries, which are wealthy of vast energy sources. We have seen many examples of this situation in the countries that have oil resources.

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