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Editor-in-Chief: John Karkazis (ikarkazis@aegean.gr)

Managing Editor: Markella Koutsouradi (koutsouradim@stt.aegean.gr)

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THE LIBYAN CRISIS. WORKING THOUGHTS REGARDING A VIABLE SETTLEMENT

Dr. John Karkazis^{*1}, Emeritus Professor
University of the Aegean at Chios, Greece.

Abstract. The authors presents at the beginning a brief history of Libya and then a review of recent literature on the civil war in the country, the resulting administrative and constitutional chaos and the international efforts to promote viable peace and constitutional arrangements in it. The author focus on the international efforts to tackle the Libyan crisis paying particular attention to the osmotic interactions between the Libyan and Greco-Turkish crises and the distribution of naval power of the main actors intervening in Libya. Finally, the author presents working proposals for a viable settlement of the Libyan crisis.

1. BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBYA

1711-1912: Present-day Libya had been a semi-independent province of the Ottoman Empire

1912-1947: Libya had been a colony of Italy

1943-1951: Libya had been under British and French occupation

1951: Libya became independent as a kingdom under King Idris I.

1969: A military coup, under the leadership of Muammar Gaddafi, overthrew King Idris. Colonel Gaddafi governed the country until 2011 when the Libyan civil erupted.

1973: Libyan cultural revolution

2011: Eruption of the civil war leading to the overthrow and killing of Muammar Gaddafi.

2012: Election of the General National Congress (GNC).

After 2012 the House of Representatives in Tobruk claimed also to govern Libya together with GNC.

2015: The UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) was established at Tripoli and the GNC was disbanded to support it.

2015- : The second civil war between various tribal and Islamist militias and also between the UN-backed government at Tripoli and the government at Tobruk which is supported by the Libyan National Army (LNA).

A guide to the United States' history of recognition, diplomatic, and consular relations, by country, since 1776 is given by the Office of the Historian, Department of State, U.S.A.

<https://history.state.gov/countries/libya>

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shoham (2005) analyzed the contrasting trends in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Proliferation in the Middle East drawing comparisons between Iran and Libya.

Karkazis (2011) gives a regional crisis risks assessment for the case of Egypt focusing on the terrorist organizations and militant groups acting in the country and also on critical issues that can lead to the destabilization of it such as: social, ethnic and religious cohesion, social discontent and risk of unrest, news dissemination (risk of social unrest dissemination), social unrest defusing capabilities (risk of social unrest sustainability), insurrection and regime collapse risk.

Johnston (2012) examine the transformations of the conflict status in Libya with reference to the regime of Common Articles 2 and 3. As the author states in the abstract of the paper "This article will track the transformations of conflict status in Libya, arguing that the initial internal uprising rose to the level of a non-international armed conflict, triggering the application of Common Article 3, and was then transformed by foreign intervention into an international armed conflict, governed by the stricter standards of Common Article 2".

Ekwealor and Uzodike (2016) examine the African Union interventions in African conflicts with emphasis on Libya paying special attention to the problems and lack of unity and leadership in this country. Their paper tries, as they state, to answer the following questions: "Why is Africa not truly united? Why was the AU divided on Libya? What lessons can be learnt from the Libyan crisis?"

Lerman (2017) examines the Libyan tragedy and its meaning in the geopolitical and ideological sphere focusing on the indecisiveness of the Western Powers to intervene in the country to stop the civil war and help it to establish viable institutions under effective international guarantees. The author underlines the fact that the Obama administration's policies in Libya after 2011 contributed to the rapid increase of the chaos and the terrorism in the country.

Muller and Cornago (2018) analyze the issue of proxy-mediation as a means of building peace focusing on the EU's mediation support in the Libyan civil war.

Kedar and Gottlieb (2018) examine the post-Qaddafi Libya focusing on the chaos prevailing in the country since the toppling of Qaddafi. They point out that "Post-Qaddafi Libya is divided between two governments, and the consequence of that division is mounting chaos. Europe, the US, Canada, and the UN will have to decide at what point it will be necessary to go back into Libya to restore order". They conclude by posing the question of under what circumstances USA, Europe and UN should intervene in Libya to contain the domestic chaos before it splits to other parts of Northern Africa.

Karkazis et al (2018) give an analysis of the social factors that resulted in the 2011 social unrest in Egypt, integrated with a personality profiler of its revolutionary leadership and the Muslim Brotherhood imbedded terrorist organizations and activities.

Pusztai (2019) examines the issue of conflict resolution in Libya. Since the situation in Libya is getting alarmingly dangerous, the author argues on the need for a new strategy to be developed in Libya including all four instruments of power in a coordinated way.

Dorsey (2020b) analyzes the role of Egypt and UAE in the Libyan civil war. As he points out the recent inauguration of a new Egyptian military base on the Red Sea has a special symbolism in the context of rivalries shaping the future of the Middle East as well as north and east Africa. He also argues that the mediating efforts of Egypt aimed at achieving a ceasefire in Libya are part of a strategic pursuit of it "to keep", as he states, "Egypt's hands free to deal with Ethiopia, should a conflict erupt". The author also concludes that UAE rather Haftar may have a decisive voice in Berlin.

Gottlieb and Kedar (2020) examine the Turkish involvement in the Libyan and Syrian civil war. The authors underline the fact that "Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is constantly looking for opportunities to enhance its status as a regional superpower and promote its Islamist ideology in the Arab Middle East. Libya is the newest arena in which Erdoğan is trying to capitalize on inter-Arab rivalries, this time in service to his desire to lay claim to gas under the seabed of the Mediterranean". The authors conclude that Turkey's intervention in Syria and Libya should be viewed as a major crime against those countries and Europe alike.

Dorsey (2020a) analyzes the UAE-Turkey rivalry in Libya and Syria and its regional impact. As he points out "The United Arab Emirates and Turkey are locked in a regional power struggle that has fueled conflict in Libya and could spark renewed fighting in Syria. This struggle, like that between Saudi Arabia and Iran, threatens to keep the Middle East and North Africa on edge". One of the

author's conclusions is that UAE-Turkey rivalry is a zero-sum game which is taking place in proxy battlefields.

Fredriksen and Tziarras (2020) analyze the Libyan civil war focusing on its security implications for the country and the Region and commenting on the prospects of the conflict and the peace process pursued by UN and other international actors.

Ippoliti (2020) address the inefficacy of the current players in negotiating a civil contract by focusing on the economic origins of Libyan malaise and suggesting how the impasse can be bridged by focusing on existing Economic Institutions. The author points out that "Post-revolutionary Libya has failed to offer the Libyan people a legitimate social contract. As a consequence, militias and elites have felt entitled to the sovereign wealth that lies within the economic institutions of the State" and concludes that "new interlocutors and new options need to be endorsed by those Western and regional powers that have the tools needed to compel sides to work together towards the negotiation of a new social contract".

Beccaro (2020) in his paper "ISIS in Libya and beyond, 2014–2016" examines the threats posed by ISIS in Libya and in North Africa. Concluding the author states that "the paper aims to demonstrate both the hybrid nature of ISIS, which affects various military and political approaches and allows ISIS to withstand classic counterterrorism operations. It also considers ISIS's ability to operate across borders and to exploit local instability".

Ceccorulli and Coticchia (2020) address the issue of terrorism and migration with reference to the Italian military engagement in Niger and Libya and on the basis of the recent parliamentary debates on these missions and the foreign, security and defense policies of Italy.

Heo (2020) examines the sectarianism and terrorism in Libya and Egypt focusing on the Libya beheadings and ISIS violence against Egypt's Copts and how these

tragic incidents invoked the Coptic Church and its partnership with the Egyptian security state.

3. OSMOTIC INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE LIBYAN AND THE GRECO-TURKISH CRISES

In the wider Mediterranean basin, two serious crises are currently taking place which have a great historical depth: the Libyan and the Greco-Turkish crises. An element of the Libyan crisis that is exacerbating the difficulties of resolving it is the fragmentation of the internal front into tribes and armed militias that are remnants of the Gaddafi era and the presence of foreign mercenaries. On the other hand, one element that makes the Greek-Turkish crisis particularly divisive is the gaps and ambiguities of the Treaty of Lausanne.

The immediate and urgent need to resolve these two crises (which feed each other through particularly negative synergies and osmoses) before they become malformed is now clear in the geopolitical horizon. On the other hand, the processes applied to resolve these two crises, if they unfold along a parallel trajectory, can create very positive synergies that will facilitate and accelerate the peace arrangements on both sides.

The process of resolving the Libyan crisis (like any similar one) must obviously take into account the interests of the external actors involved in or influenced by the crisis (Turkey, Italy, U.K., France, USA, Russia, Greece, Egypt etc.) as well as the interests of the internal forces which interact in a complex and largely stochastic way with those of the exogenous powers. The first four powers have special interests and exercise increased and multi-facet influence on Libya as governing powers (France and U.K. as military occupiers) during the last three hundred years. Furthermore, because the exercise of military pressure, whether in the phase of engagement or of disengagement and the conclusion of agreements plays a very important role in the promotion of peace process, the degree of the involvement of external actors must reflect among other factors their military power distribution in the wider Region. Another crucial issue to be addressed in the context of the Libyan crisis settlement agreements is the introduction of strong

legal commitments and innovative tools for the implementation as well as surveillance, military and political, of the peace process, elements that were absent from the Berlin Agreement.

4. NAVAL POWER DISTRIBUTION AMONG THE MAIN ACTORS

Regarding the distribution of naval power of the involved external powers in the wider Mediterranean basin, it can be summarized as follows:

The following analysis shows only the large fleet units (aircraft and helicopter carriers, frigates and submarines). With regard to Spain and France, whose naval forces also operate outside the Mediterranean, we estimate that two thirds of their total naval power operates in the Mediterranean on a regular basis.

Aircraft carriers

NATO countries (USA, Spain, France and Italy) have 3-6 aircraft carriers (depending on the situation) in the Mediterranean: 1-2 heavy American aircraft carriers occasionally joining the force of the 6th Fleet based in Gaeta (Italy), 1 heavy French (Charles de Gaulle) and 1 Spanish (Prince of Asturias) which occasionally also act in the Mediterranean and 2 light Italian ones. Russia does not have an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean for a long time. Kuznetsov is in a long period of maintenance and repairs.

Helicopter carriers

NATO countries have 7-8 helicopter carriers in the Mediterranean (one of them is Turkish, which will start the testing phase in 2021), Egypt 1 (Mistral class) and Russia none.

Frigates and cruisers

NATO countries have 70-72 frigates in the Mediterranean. Russia has 2-3 frigates in it that are part of its Mediterranean fleet, which currently has a total of 15 units assigned to the Tartus (Syria) naval base.

Submarines

NATO countries have 39-41 submarines in the Mediterranean, of which 6-8 (French) are nuclear-powered and equipped with missiles carrying nuclear warheads. Russia has 2-3 nuclear submarines while Israel has a total of 6 conventional Dolphin type submarines (equipped with nuclear missiles) with most of them most probably operating outside the Mediterranean (Indian Ocean).

Naval bases

As for the naval bases that support the above naval forces, France has its main naval base in Toulon, Spain a naval base in Cartagena, Italy has naval bases in Spezia and Taranto, Greece in Salamis and Souda and Turkey has 4 naval bases in the Mediterranean (one of them in Albania) with the largest of them located in Aksaz of Marmaris. Russia has only one naval base in Tartus (Syria).

It is clear from the above that Russia's involvement in the Libyan crisis during this period of time is characterized by an overstretched military power supported by comparatively very limited naval forces which are acting in an economic environment of acute financial stagnation.

5. WORKING PROPOSALS FOR TACKLING THE LIBYAN CRISIS

We expect that the whole peace process will be based on an amended (upgraded) version of Berlin Conference agreements involving legally binding monitoring procedures in which Greece will have an active role at least in the economic reconstruction of Libya.

We argue at this point that a viable settlement of the Libyan crisis should be based on the following arrangements:

1. Agreed withdrawal of Haftar and Saraj from the active political scene to give a new "momentum" to the peace process.
2. Establishment of a federal state structure with a federal capital in Tripoli (with its international airport being put under the control of UN forces) and two regional capitals, Tobruk (LNA) and Misrata (GNA). The wider area of Sirte (including the oil terminals) should be demilitarized and brought under the control of UN forces.
3. The federal parliament to be established at Sirte.
4. Regional parliaments to be established at Tripoli (West Libya) and Tobruk or El Beida (East Libya)
5. The headquarters of State Oil Company, the Central Bank of Libya and the regional government of Cyrenaica to be established at Benghazi.
6. The federal president to be elected by the federal parliament and equipped with the power to propose to the regional parliaments of eastern and western Libya for approval the two vice-presidents based in Benghazi and Misrata respectively.
7. The military oversight of the agreements to be entrusted to NATO with an operational headquarters in Naples.
8. The monitoring of Libyan refugee flows to be entrusted to FRONTEX with establishment of operational headquarters and a central base in Sirte and two local bases in Benghazi and Misrata.
9. The 10-member military committee for the control of the peace process provided for in Berlin Agreement to be retained but with a modified composition: instead of 5 + 5 (5 members from GNA and 5 from LNA) to have the following composition: 4 + 3 + 3, that is 4 members assigned by the federal government and 3 by each one of the two regional governments.

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***1: Dr. John Karkazis**

STUDIES. B.Sc. in Mathematics, Dept. of Mathematics, University of Athens (1975), M.Sc. in Operational Mathematics, University of Liverpool (1977), Ph.D. in Operational Research, Dept. of Computational and Statistical Science, University of Liverpool, U.K. (1980).

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC CAREER. 1982-1983: *Assistant Director*, Center for Quality Control of Electronic Materials, National Defense Research Center (NDRC), Greece, 1984-1995: *Director*, Department of Organization and *Head*, Communications Security Unit (NDRC), 1985-1986: *Lecturer*, Department of Statistics and Informatics, Athens University of Economics & Business (AUEB), 1995-2001: *Associate Professor*, Department of Operations Research and Marketing (AUEB), 1986-1992: *Assistant Professor*, Dept. of Business Administration, University of the Aegean (UA), Greece, 1992-1994: *Associate Professor*, Dept. of Business Administration (UA), 1995: *Visiting Professor*, Business School, Warwick University (U.K.), 2001-2019: *Professor*, Dept. of Shipping, Trade and Transport (UA), 2020- : *Emeritus Professor*, University of the Aegean.

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES. 1997-2001: *Scientific Director*, Lab. of Environment and Locational Analysis (AUEB), 2006-2010: *Dean*, Business School (UA), 2007-: *Scientific Director*, Lab. of Geographical Information Systems Geo-economy and Geo-politics (GEOPOL Lab, UA), 2014-2018 : *Dean*, Business School (UA), 2014- : *President*, Interface Committee of University of the Aegean with the Chian Society

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES. 1994- : *Founder and President*, Constantine Porphyrogenetus International Association, 1994-1997 and 2002-: *Founder and President*, Institute of Middle East Studies "Al Mamun", 2007-2019: *Vice-Chairman*, Eastern Mediterranean Institute for Research, Innovation, Cooperation and Mediation (EMPIRICUM), 2015-: *Director*, Center of Strategic Studies.

PUBLICATIONS: 345, Thematic distribution. Locational issues: 43, computational geometry algorithms: 8, environmental issues: 29, heuristic algorithms:7, transportation & routing: 210, multi-criteria analysis: 6, geo-economy: 205, digital systems and GIS: 14, geopolitics:16, facilities and equipment security:3, defense and security: 30, Spatial distribution. Turkey: 65, Germany: 62, U.K.: 50, France: 31, Israel & Palestine: 11, Iran: 11, Greece: 11, Russia: 5, CITATIONS: 680