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**The factors that led to NATO’s military intervention
in Libya in 2011**

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The reasons behind NATO's military intervention in Libya in 2011

Keywords: NATO, military intervention, Arab countries, United States, Qaddafi, rebels, oil factor, civil war, R2P

ABSTRACT

Libya is an oil rich Arab country, located in the North Africa and ruled by Colonel Muamar Qaddafi since 1969. In 2011 Libya faced a bloody civil war between Qaddafi forces and the rebels who banded their forces against the colonel as an outcome of the Arab Spring, the revolutionary wave that took part in many Arab countries during that year. NATO's military intervention in Libya during 2011 was initially aimed to stop the civil war that broke out. In this effort took part the Western countries with France and United States being in a leading role at the whole attempt. Moreover, the Arab countries also took part by joining the intervention by having the view that a NATO's military effort in Libya would help in achieving stability and economic prosperity in the wider region of the Middle East. Nevertheless, all the countries that took part expressed also their own interests as far as the situation in Libya and the factor of the personal interests proved to be a crucial factor that led to the decision to intervene in Libya.

Introduction

The Arab Spring was the revolutionary wave that took place in many Arab countries during the 2011, came out mainly as protests against the long time monarchs. In many countries such as Egypt and Tunisia the Arab Spring resulted in the overthrow of long time monarchs and in their replacement with new ones. On the contrary in Libya the result of the Arab Spring was the break out of a bloody and disastrous civil war between the old regime of the colonel Muammar Qaddafi that ruled the country since 1969 and the Libyan rebels located in Benghazi who demanded the overthrow of Qaddafi. On 19 March of 2011 and after a period full of blood, NATO decided to intervene with military means in order to end the bloodshed that took part in Libya since the breakup of the civil war that began on February of the same year. NATO's decision to intervene with military means in Libya was based on factors that expressed the interests of all the countries that took part in the coalition. That decision was also triggered by the fact that Qaddafi was responsible for the violation of the human rights, the violence, the censorship and the international values that were encroached by that time in Libya. The Qaddafi's practices in combination with the responsibility to protect doctrine, an international commitment for the end of the atrocities into a country that suffers from civil war or other fatal situations led to NATO's decision to intervene in Libya.

In the first part we will examine Libya's relation with the West since 1969, the year that Qaddafi became the absolute ruler of the country by overthrowing King Idris I of Libya. At the same part we will understand Qaddafi's foreign policy during the first years of his governance and how the western countries reacted that period namely the cold war era. In the second part we will focus on the events that took part before NATO's decision to intervene in Libya. Violence and censorship coming from the Qaddafi regime were two major issues in Libya the days before the breakup of the Civil War. Afterwards, in the third part we will examine how NATO's allies came to an agreement as far as the decision for the intervention. As we moving on we will focus on the actual reasons that led NATO to take the decision to intervene in the Middle Eastern country. Especially the reasons that are going to be analyzed are the dominant perception about France's interests in Libya, the economic benefits for the western countries that the intervention would result and the defense of the foreign interests of the United States. Moreover we are going to analyze factors such as the tribalism, Qaddafi's support for the terrorism and the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine in order to understand better NATO's decision to intervene. In the conclusions we will sum up the arguments and we are going to find out which were the strongest reasons that led to the decision for intervention. As far as the methodology that is been used in order to approach this issue, it is based mainly in secondary sources.

Libya's relations with the West since the Libyan Revolution of 1969

The relations between Libya and the West have never been easy since Muamar Qaddafi became the President of the country. At September 1st of 1969 the colonel Muamar Qaddafi was the leader of a coup d'état that was carried by the Free Officers Movement, a group of the military opposed to King Idris I of Libya who was the King of the country since 1951. Before Qaddafi becomes the leader of the Libyan Revolution, the country had a pro- Western orientation as the King Idris I was a devoted supporter of the cooperation of Libya with the Western powers. During the years of his reign, King Idris I had been blamed for being a stooge for the Western countries due to certain deals that he agreed with the Brittan and the US. These contracts were related with the factor of the military bases and with the factor of investments in Libya. King Idris I, by permitting the presence of western military bases in Libya, would have as a return significant help in order to achieve the development of Libya¹. And it is true that the country underwent the development process during the decade of 1950 and 1960. The close cooperation of Libya with the Brittan and the USA made a large part of the Arab population of the country to feel unhappy and dissatisfied. This part of the Libyan population was especially the Arab nationalists who believed that the country's strong bonds with the West were harmful for the Arabs and these bonds should come to an end. During the 1960's, the King Idris I was regarded as a King that had lost his influence in many and major parts of his country and in combination with the deterioration of his health, it was easy for the Colonel Muamar Qaddafi to seize the power with a coup d'état.

When Muamar Qaddafi came to power, the Western Powers soon realized that the relations between Libya and the allies of the former King would be difficult. Qaddafi's egocentric character and his radical ideology made it hard for the countries of the West to coordinate and finally to reach to an agreement. Pan-Arabism and Radical Islamism were the main pillars of the Qaddafi regime since 1969². Moreover, the first years of the Libyan Revolution, Qaddafi did a big effort to consolidate the power among the Free Officers Movement in order to gain the absolute control of the state and for that purpose, it was necessary to reduce any kind of external influence inside the country that would revive the previous regime or would support those who were against Qaddafi. During that initial period, Qaddafi in order to achieve that consolidation of power used the military power but also he imposed a puritanical Islamic Moral Code³ that was obligatory to be followed by everyone in the country. Libyan populace didn't knew much about political mobilization in the public sphere mainly because they had lived for a long time under a monarchy that they couldn't have many political rights and that means that the army was a necessary tool because it would help the Revolutionaries to achieve an orderly transition to the new socialist,

¹ Al Jazeera, "Libya's forgotten King", 19 November 2015.

² Douglas Little, (2013) "To the shores of Tripoli: America, Qaddafi, and the Libyan Revolution 1969-1989 The International History Review, 35:1, 70-99

³ Raymond A Hinnebusch (1984) Charisma, revolution and state formation: Qaddafi and Libya, Third World Quarterly, 6:1, 59-73

as the revolutionaries called it, regime. The final regime that Muammar Qaddafi established in Libya was called “Jamahiriya”. Jamahiriya, that can be translated as “the state of the masses” was a political system mainly based on Qaddafi’s Green Book that started in Libya since 1975. It supposed to be a direct democracy without the mediation of any other political parties, besides the political parties were not allowed⁴. Through Jamahiriya, Colonel Qaddafi wanted somehow to underline the Arab character of the country.

The coup d’état in Libya was a completely unexpected incident for the United States and the Brittan. During the years of the Revolution (1969-1989) namely the Cold War period, Libya was regarded by the USA as a state friendly to the Soviet Union. This standpoint was based firstly on Washington’s fears that Qaddafi and the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) would sooner or later turn against the United States and therefore Qaddafi’s practices would put in a great danger USA’s interests in the wider region of the East Mediterranean by targeting the oilfields and the Wheelus field air base in Tripoli and secondly, was based on the CIA’s concerns about Libya and the Soviet Union relations. The long term enemy of the USA, that period, the USSR was in favor of that political climate between the Libya and the United States. Specifically, Qaddafi created bonds with the Soviet Union and he managed to take advantage of the military assistance that they could offer him⁵. Moreover, Libya was buying a lot of military equipment and weapons from the USSR, and because of that, the Arab country was regarded as one of the most reliable customers of the Soviet Union⁶. Although the relationship between Libya and the USSR was close we can surely say that there were some limits at their cooperation. The United States, mainly during the Ronald Reagan’s period, believed that the bonds between the two countries were deeper and stronger and that is why they worried so much about the close relation and friendship of these two countries. The truth is that many times the American Secret Agents of CIA had overestimated the issue of Libya and USSR. Qaddafi had always seen his relations with the USSR, as a friendship that would have only had gains for his country. Besides, Qaddafi himself had proclaimed his country as a “Supporter of Positive Neutrality” and he was standing along with the Third World countries. Although Qaddafi himself as mentioned before, had proclaimed his regime as a socialist movement, he wasn’t in favor of the revolutionary waves around the world that they had a Marxist or communistic point of view. The ideology of the Pan- Arabism and Pan- Islamism that Qaddafi brought on forth in Libya had some severe results also for the United States that finally confirmed their biggest fears about their interests in this specific region. Specifically, when Qaddafi seized the power in Libya, he expropriated the U.S. oil companies and he also forced the United States to abolish their air base in Libya, the Wheelus Field Air Base, located outside Tripoli⁷. The Wheelus Field was located in the Kingdom of

⁴ Forging a democracy from Libya’s Jamahiriya (2011), Strategic Comments, 17:7, 1:3

⁵ Seeking Gaddafi: Libya, the West and the Arab Spring, Daniel Kawczynski, 2011, Biteback Publishing,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid (Raymond Hinnebusch).

Libya and during the governance of the King Idris I, the air base was regarded as the biggest U.S. military base outside the U.S.. It is obvious that the Western countries since then regarded Qaddafi as a big trouble for the wider region that must be overthrown.

The events that preceded the NATO's military intervention in Libya

As it is mentioned above, the West had never been in favor of the Qaddafi regime in Libya from the first years of its existence. Qaddafi's attitude, decisions and actions worried the United States a lot and the overthrow of the dictator had always been a plan. As a result, when the Libyan Civil War broke out in 2011 the deposition of Muamar Qaddafi from power seemed urgent but also imperative for the western allies. The Civil War of Libya in 2011 was a result of the Arab Spring, the revolutionary wave that took place in most of the Middle Eastern countries that year and created a "domino effect" because the power of the social media made the spread of the revolution among the Arab countries very quick and easy. During the period that the Arab Spring took place, Libya was regarded as a secular state and Qaddafi had proceeded into crucial reforms such as the ban of child marriage. The equality between men and women was also a plan for Qaddafi. The situation of the women in Libya was improved and the regime did efforts for equal payment and equal chances at the education and at the field of work for both women and men⁸. Despite that situation and the apparent prosperity at the same time Libyan people were facing violation of the human rights and crucial problems such as the corruption of Qaddafi regime that was characterized by patronage, violence and censorship at all the mass media. The Jamahiri political system of the indirect democracy through the popular committees didn't actually worked during the 2000's because only a small portion of the Libyan population took part in the local congresses⁹ as due to the state corruption, people felt that they couldn't actually influence the regime and consequently there were not any chances for a change through the participation in political procedures. Given that fact, when the Arab Spring broke out in 2011 at the neighboring countries of Tunisia and Egypt, the circumstances were the appropriate for the revolt in Libya. After Mubarak's downfall in Egypt, protesters in Libya's second biggest city Benghazi, started to demand the oust of Muamar Qaddafi.

When the Arab Spring broke out in Libya, were revealed the strong differences between the Libyan people in many aspects of their lives. Differences that in the future would play a major role in the development of the country's civil war. Although there were some basic common requests for transparency in the political life of the country and demands for more representation through the political institutions¹⁰, these major differences were substantive but oppressed and as a result,

⁸ Kiapi Evelin Matsamura, "Gaddafi's odd love affair with women", The Observer, 27 October 2011

⁹ George Joffe (2011) The Arab Spring in North Africa : Origins and prospects , The Journal of North African Studies, 16:4, 507-532

¹⁰ Lisa Anderson "Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the differences Between Tunisia, Egypt and Libya", Foreign Affairs, May/June 2011

they couldn't be expressed for many decades due to the strict and authoritarian Qaddafi rule. These differences were the regional and tribal divisions inside the country that existed for a long time among the Libyans. The impact of the Arab Spring in Libya was disastrous. Unlike the neighboring countries of Egypt and Tunisia, Muamar Qaddafi did not accept to leave the leadership of the country as it was the Libyan people's major demand. Dictator Qaddafi chose to maintain to his position and consequently he led Libya into a bloody civil war. The Libyan civil war started from Qaddafi's denial to tolerate any kind of demonstration by the protesters in 2011, a move that revealed the regime's weakness. The regime was weak because gradually many of its members disintegrated from their positions and went to different locations in the country in order to suppress uprisings in other cities of Libya and Qaddafi himself feared that there would be the same result as it happened with the other Arab countries, namely the collapse of the previous regimes and their replacement with a new one, if he would let the protesters to demonstrate free in the streets of Tripoli and of Benghazi.

Immediately, the situation in Libya polarized and the population was divided between the two main opponent camps that had been created. The Libyan Civil War was now a reality. The first camp was the one that led the rebellion against Muamar Qaddafi and was called the National Transition Council (NTC). The camp had political and military rebel administration and incited the riots in Benghazi, one of the two biggest Libyan cities in order to join the uprising¹¹. This side of the belligerents would later be supported by the NATO military when intervened Libya. The second belligerent was the governmental camp and the Libyan Armed Forces that were under Qaddafi's control due to the absence of Libyan Defense Ministry. The dictator had banned the creation of this Ministry probably under the fear of a coup d'état against him coming from the military forces. Despite the power of the rebels, the regime still had its supporters. The Libyan Defense forces consisted of army officers and militaries coming from the close environment of Qaddafi¹² and they were regarded as people of absolute trust for the regime (most of them were Qaddafi's relatives) that would fight in order to win the battle against the Libyan armed rebels. As far as the development of the civil war, Qaddafi immediately lost the control for a major reason that is simply called "the geography factor". Due to the fact that the two largest cities of Libya, Tripoli and Benghazi are being divided by the Libyan Desert, losing the control of one of them practically means the loss of the half country. Consequently, when on February of 2011 Qaddafi lost the control of Benghazi and the rebels seized power there, meant that he had already failed to control the half of the territory of Libya. The result was that after a long time of riots and clashes that started on February of 2011,

¹¹ Dalacoura Katerina (2012) "The 2011 uprisings in the Arab Middle East: political change and geopolitical implications", *International Affairs*, 88:1, 63-79

¹² Zoltan Barany (2011) "The role of the Military", *Journal of Democracy*, 24-53

the country finally was spitted into two: the East part was the land of the rebels, whereas the west part was still under Qaddafi rule¹³.

Violence, Censorship and International Media Coverage

The regime's response to the riots of 2011 was brutal and violent. The dictator's reaction against the protesters with the excessive use of violence and the censorship was one of the reasons that NATO military intervention was triggered in Libya a few months later. Moreover vital human rights were violated from the authoritarian regime. Specifically, there were accusations on May 2011 against the Qaddafi regime for using violence systematically against the civilians¹⁴. There were also accusations referring to the Libyan army. According to those accusations Libyan army officers often tortured and many times killed civilians in order to stifle the growing movement against Gaddafi's dictatorship¹⁵. Moreover, when Qaddafi was informed about the resolution 1970 of the United Nations, that was condemned his regime for violation of the human rights of the civilians, not only he didn't change practice but also on March 2011 governmental army forces went to Benghazi and according to reports¹⁶ with the view to make a slaughter. During the Arab Spring in Libya there were tremendous violations of human rights, moreover the regime constantly used the rapes, according to many valid points, as a threat in order to frighten the rowdy protesters. By analyzing this behavior we can safely conclude that the dictator was not willing at all to negotiate the situation with the citizens in order to find a political solution through dialogue. In addition, this is a main difference with the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, where the crowd's demands and requests were being heard and followed a political transition of the previous regimes.

The issue of censorship was one more crucial subject as the violation of the press was a common practice for the regime. Before the years of the civil war, according to the "2010 Human Rights Report for Libya"¹⁷, the Libyan government did many arrests of journalists that were openly in favor of the rebels. Propaganda through national controlled media was a very useful "weapon" in Qaddafi's hands as during the civil war as the daily news were represented under a very strict governmental direction¹⁸. The news from the state controlled media were represented in favor of the Tripoli camp namely the governmental camp. At the beginning of the protests of 2011 the state owned TV did not referred to the uprisings at all and as a result, the people's information was being mostly through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. From these platforms were being shared the latest developments about the

¹³ Alia Brahimi (2011), Libya's revolution, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 16:4, 605-624

¹⁴ John J. Liolos, (2012) "Justice for Tyrants: International Criminal Court Warrants for Gaddafi Regime Crimes, *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review* 35:9

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Western, Goldsein, "Humanitarian Intervention comes of age: Lessons from Somalia and Libya" *Foreign Affairs*, 90:6, *Foreign Affairs*

¹⁷ US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Libya

¹⁸ Al Jazeera, "Libya: The Propaganda War", 12 March 2011

revolts. Besides, this was the major characteristic of the Arab Spring, the diffusion of the information via alternative means of media as the old ones that were state controlled. The few international journalists that were allowed to have access in Libya and cover the events of the Civil War managed to divulge the cruel situation of the Arab country. Qaddafi's ferocity was revealed and the road for the NATO's military intervention in the country on 19 March of 2011 had already opened.

The decision to intervene

When the Libyan Crisis was in its heyday, the international community decided that was time for action as Qaddafi's crimes couldn't be acceptable anymore by the vast majority of the western societies. France was one of the most avid supporters of the western invasion in Libya. The French President in 2011, Nicola Sarkozy, announced on 25 February 2011 that "Qaddafi must go"¹⁹. By saying that, the French President personified the problem into Qaddafi's person and insinuated that the Colonel should leave his position in order to stop the instability and the terror in the region. Immediately, namely the next day, on 26 February the Security Council of the United Nation convened in order to try to find a solution about the Libyan conflict. The result was the "Resolution 1970" where the outcome was the unanimously demand for the end of the systematical violation of human rights in Libya and additionally, the decision to refer that violation to the International Criminal Court²⁰. This decision was a huge step because the UN member states decided basically to isolate the government of Libya by imposing heavy sanctions such as travel ban and arms embargo. The next crucial step was the one that led to the decision for the NATO's military invasion in Libya and was called "The UN Resolution 1973" and it was approved on 17 March. Specifically, with the Resolution 1973, NATO was authorized to install a no-fly zone above Libya. The installation of this no-fly zone aimed to be the first step for the solution of the crisis because by that time the air force of the Libyan government was not allowed to fly anymore. The civilians and the Libyan opposition were protected from the bombing attacks because when Qaddafi realized the importance of the crowd demonstrations, he ordered intensive airstrikes. Additionally, one more factor was added in the frame and it was the United Nation's doctrine about the responsibility to protect (R2P), referring probably to the protection of the civilians during a civil war or a crisis. The responsibility to protect was one of the reasons that NATO decided to intervene Libya as it will be analyzed later. Two days after the installation of the no-fly zone, on 19 March of 2011 NATO intervened with military means in Libya. The initial aim of this action was basically to achieve a cease fire between the two belligerent sides. The whole operation consisted of naval and air forces named "Odyssey Dawn" and it was the third US involvement to an Islamic country as previously there were major participations in Afghanistan and Iraq

¹⁹ Reuters, "France's Sarkozy says Gaddafi must go", 25 February 2011

²⁰ "In swift decisive action, security council imposes tough measures on Libyan regime, Adopting Resolution 1970 in Wake of crackdown on protesters" United Nations 26 February 2011

interventions. The countries that took part in the operation were mostly the western countries with USA, France and Britain being in a leading role during the process.

It is very important to mention that also Arabic countries were in favor of the military intervention and they took actively part by joining the coalition²¹. The Arab League adopted unanimously the UN Resolution 1973 and Jordan, Qatar and United Arab Emirates cooperated with the West in order to protect the civilians and overthrow the dictator Qaddafi. Besides the text of the Resolution 1973 recognizes the significant importance of the participation of the Arab League in the Joint Task Force. Specifically, the text acknowledges the will of the Arab League to maintain the peace and the regional stability in the Middle Eastern area. This participation was essential and crucial because through the cooperation with the Arab Countries, NATO managed to legitimize the intervention as no Arab country would urge that the Libyan Intervention was one more Western attack against a Middle Eastern and Muslim country. The invasion in Libya would not be regarded as an imperialistic war that has as a target to enslave the Arabs and to tamper their culture, ethics and values. Besides the military intervention was something that Arabs themselves had requested because they needed stability in their region. It is not a matter of identity, as it was the invasions of the previous centuries, but a matter of respect of human lives. Now the Arab Countries were a part of the whole western attempt and moreover they had the same interest with the west on the Libyan issue.

The reasons that NATO intervened in Libya

There are several reasons why NATO decided to intervene in Libya. Except the basic causes that are referred to the text of Resolution 1973, such as the violation of human right, the protection of the civilians from the attacks of their own government and the terror that the autarchic Arab Jamahiriya was causing to them for decades. Many other reasons are underlying the NATO's decision and practically reflecting the interests of the participants in the wider region of Southeastern Mediterranean and of the Middle East. US, France and U.K had different motives but they were in favor of the answer to the brutal Qaddafi regime with military means.

The dominant perception about France's Interests

As mentioned before, France was one of the most avid supporters of the invasion and a leading country to the whole military operation. To be more specific, Nicola Sarkozy, who was very persistent about the installation of a no-fly zone in Libya, immediately recognized the legitimacy of the Libyan rebels in Benghazi. Furthermore, there is a dominant perception about France that says that the country had many interests in many factors from the invasion in Libya. The motives that

²¹ United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 1973, 17 March 2011
https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110927_110311-UNSCR-1973.pdf

France decided to organize and spearhead to a military intervention can be separated into two major categories. The first category is related to the French domestic factor and French military interests and the second category is related to the actual French interests in Libya. Sarkozy from the beginning of the European effort to find a solution in Libyan crisis had an aggressive attitude and was a supporter of the creation of a military coalition that would remove Qaddafi from Libya's presidency²². This stance can be explained as an effort to preserve his popularity in France by taking strong-willed decisions in the field of foreign affairs. Specifically Sarkozy would be the leader of a military invasion in a Middle Eastern country where people there were oppressed and lived under a dictatorship. Surely this action and the image of the "man of action" was a huge boost for his popularity especially that period that the French elections of 2012 were approaching. There is also the European factor that was pressing France that period. Germany had managed to acquire a leading role into European politics due to financial issues as due to the financial crisis that many southern European countries were facing, Germany decided for their financial in monetary terms. That means that France had lost the prestige of the strong and powerful European country²³ and Germany was the decision maker into the European Union. By planning and leading the Libyan campaign, France made it clear that she was still the leader of the foreign affairs and the military decisions of the European Union.

France had also actual interests in Libya. The energy field has been a crucial factor for France's decision to intervene because just like the other European countries such as Italy and Germany, France wanted to secure the oil interests in the region. The French energy companies wanted to take advantage of the Libyan unexplored oil. Specifically the French energy company Total SA hoped to have a good energy deal with the new government of the rebels and that is why Sarkozy was the first one, as it mentioned above, that recognized the legitimacy of the rebels. As a result the western countries, including France, were expecting that Qaddafi's downfall would help them to continue having the prices of oil that had before the Libyan Civil War, namely the plunge of the prices for the exports of the Libyan oil²⁴. Qaddafi's conflict with the rebels was disastrous for the West in terms of energy. By taking the control of the political situation in Libya the foreign countries, managed to take the control also of the energy factor in the country.

Economic Reasons

Except from France's oil interests and oil companies that referred before, there are several economic reasons that have to do with the economic interests of the countries that took part in the military intervention in Libya. Especially Italy, Germany and Spain have also oil companies that signed contracts with Libya and it is estimated that

²² Forbes, "France U,K have different motives for intervening in Libya", 29 March 2011

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The New York Times, "The Scramble for Access to Libya's Oil Wealth Begins" Clifford Krauss, 22 August 2011

the 85 percent of the Libyan oil is exported to these countries²⁵. Additionally, the U.S had also signed oil contracts with the Qaddafi regime back in 2004 under Bush's presidency²⁶ and both countries seemed to want badly this contract because that meant the normalization of the bilateral relations. Qaddafi wanted to have oil ties with the United States firstly because that would be a huge boost at the Libyan economy and secondly because by this way he would finally felt safe as far as the foreign relations with the United States that as it is mentioned before, in the past those relations were difficult and troublesome. The Libyan oil is regarded as a very important asset for the Western Countries and the United States mainly because it needs only a little refinement namely when the oil is leaving from Libya and is going to the country that buys it, this country have to do only a little work when it comes to refinement and its conversion to gasoline. This is why the Libyan oil is so desirable in contrast with the oil coming from Saudi Arabia, which needs bigger levels of refinement and the bigger refinement means bigger cost for the buyer country. The oil reserves of Libya are also regarded as the largest in Africa so as a result the European Countries had done many oil contracts with Qaddafi before the civil war broke out. The political developments inside the country had huge consequences to the European economies because when the conflict began, immediately all the oil operations ended as it was not possible to continue the oil distribution in a country that suffered from civil war and every day bombing. If the civil war didn't end immediately then it was likely that the Libyan oil infrastructures including the pipelines would be destroyed. Moreover, the European people that worked at the oil companies could not work anymore to Libya as at the beginning it was very dangerous and later they didn't have job. All these elements means a huge economic disaster for the western countries as during 2011 it was estimated that the pro- civil war levels of oil production wouldn't be easy to recover. Therefore, the conflict between the rebels and the Qaddafi forces would harm seriously the economic plans of the West not only due to the postponement of the oil production but also due to the consequent rise of the price of the Libyan oil to the international markets. In conclusion the basic reason why NATO intervened Libya and supported the rebels of Benghazi as far as the economic factor, was that the rebels had made it clear that the countries that would help them actively to gain the leadership of Libya would later be benefited from the new government²⁷, and that was true because the new Libyan government would indeed needed the revenues from the oil production in order to survive and bring Libya to the economic levels of the past. The fear of the raise of the oil in the international markets and of the destruction of the pipelines and oil infrastructures forced the NATO's powers to act rapidly resulting to the intervention.

²⁵ Olga Belogolova "What happens to Libyan Oil after Qaddafi?" The Atlantic, 25 August 2011

²⁶ Steven Mufson, "Conflict in Libya: US oil companies sit on sidelines as Qaddafi maintains hold" The Washington Post, 10 June 2011

²⁷ Julian Borger and Terry Macalister, "The race is on for Libya's oil, with Brittan and France both staking a claim", The Guardian, 1 September 2011

The domestic reasons that led to the intervention

Tribalism

Another important reason that steered the NATO's intervention was the domestic frame of Libya. Tribalism was a structural problem into Libya's domestic politics that existed since the creation of the country and caused a lot of disputes between the different Libyan clans. The western allies wanted stability into the country in order to protect their interests but the conflicts between the Eastern and the Western tribes couldn't let this happen. Libyan society is consisted of many different tribes that are playing an important role in the Libyan politics. It is clear that the Libyan society has no coherence as the tribes are always competing to each other, making the country deeply divided. Qaddafi himself when he seized power had reinforced the role of the tribes within the society. From the 140 different clans, about the half of them had influence to the Qaddafi regime²⁸. During his governance, the colonel had created a clientistic relationship with the leaders of the tribes providing them with access to power and job opportunities²⁹. The influence that the tribal chiefs had at the political scene of Libya was significant and as a result they could definitely lead the country to a civil war. This can be understood if we see what is happening to the armed forces. Tribalism is visible to the armed forces as every tribe has its own representation there and due to this, always are created divisions, rivalries and disputes within the most important pillar of the regime, namely the army³⁰. This is probably a failure of the regime to modernize and professionalize the army. During the civil war the chief of Al- Zawiya, an important tribe located in Eastern Libya near to Benghazi, threatened to cancel the oil exports coming from his region if Qaddafi wouldn't stopped the suppression of the protesters³¹. By that time many Libyan tribes mainly located in the East joined the anti-Qaddafi protests. Those were the tribes that triggered the rebellion that ended up to the Libyan Civil War but also helped NATO to overthrow Qaddafi in 2011. One of the reasons that NATO decided to intervene in Libya was the reconciliation of the tribes in order to achieve ceasefire and stability, a situation that was desirable from all sides. Respectively, after Qaddafi's downfall urged the Libyan tribes to reconcile and for this was essential the National Transition Council to find peace with the western tribes namely the Qaddafi supporters³². This was a difficult task and also a challenge for the future because after Qaddafi's death the upper class families of the clans would want to maintain the power that had all the previous decades.

Support of the Terrorism

²⁸ Mayers Christine (2013), "Tribalism and democratic transition in Libya: Lessons from Iraq", Global Tides: vol. 7 Article 5.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ BBC News, "Libya Crisis: What role do tribal loyalties play?", Mohammed El Doufani, 21 February 2011

³¹ Al Jazeera, "Qaddafi's son warns of civil war" 21 February 2011

³² The National Interest, Ted Galen Carpenter, "Libya's deep tribalism", 25 January 2012

There are specific accusations coming from the United States, the European countries and the Security Council of the United Nations and claim that Qaddafi was supporting terrorism and was involved to terrorist attacks during the 80's. The accusations are referring mostly to the Lockerbie bombing attack on 21 December 1988 that 270 people were killed. Specifically, a Pan Am Airliner that took off from London with final destination Detroit of the United States destroyed in the air by a bomb explosion near to Lockerbie region in Scotland. Immediately, strict restrictions imposed to Libya such as banning of air links of the Libyan planes with the rest of the western countries, limitations to the Libyans that wanted to travel outside the country and the control of the Libyan oil revenues by the United Nations³³. The sanctions lasted until 1999 when two Libyan nationals held in trial in Netherlands after a demand of the United Nations. It is true that due to the dependency of the European countries on Libyan oil, France and Britain wanted to find a solution to that crisis much more than the United States. But also the demand of the Security Council of the United Nations for a reliable Libyan response for the plane bombing, the persistence for the trial of the two Libyan citizens and members of the Qaddafi regime, indicates that it is truly believed that Qaddafi had connections with terrorism and also he used terrorist practices in order to pressure³⁴. In 2003 Colonel Qaddafi formally accepted that Libya was responsible for the bombing and compensated the families of the victims of the attacks³⁵ admitted indirectly his connections with terrorism. The belief that Qaddafi had ordered the Lockerbie terrorist attack confirmed during the Libyan Civil War of 2011 when Libya's former Minister of Justice admitted in a Swedish newspaper that Qaddafi himself ordered the Lockerbie bombing³⁶. One more element that connects colonel Qaddafi with terrorism is that in the past, during his first years at the Libyan presidency he had declared that he was a big supporter of the liberation movements around the world and especially to Africa which are led by "freedom fighters" who want to change the previous leadership, namely he was a supporter of a violent remove from the power. A characteristic example is Gaddafi's support to the Irish organization IRA that consisted of radical elements that used violence against Britain³⁷. In conclusion we can understand that Muamar Qaddafi's certain actions were straightly linked with the terrorism and made Libya a terrorist state for the western countries. Qaddafi's past actions and declarations didn't let him to stay in Libya after the civil war. His connection with terrorism was one of the elements that helped NATO to take the decision to intervene. Through the intervention and by Qaddafi's removal, the region of Eastern Mediterranean would be a stable place for the Western Allies.

³³ George Joffe (2001) "Libya and Europe", *The Journal of African Studies*, 6:4, 75:92

³⁴ Douglas Kash Esq, (1994) "Libyan involvement and legal obligations in connection with the bombing of pan am flight 103", *Studies in conflict and terrorism*, 17:1, 23:28

³⁵ Felicity Barringer "Libya admits capability in Crash of Pan Am Plane", *The New York Times*, 16 August 2003

³⁶ BBC News "Colonel Qaddafi Ordered Lockerbie Bombing" 23 February 2011

³⁷ Peter Finn, "The rise and fall of Libyan leader Muamar Qaddafi" *The Washington Post*

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a doctrine acceptable by the international community and it is supposed to be triggered when the violence inside a country is about to escalate in a great degree and the population is in danger due to the excessive use of weapons and airstrikes. By being committed to R2P doctrine, the international community intends to avoid disastrous for the civilians situations such as genocides, war crimes and ethnic cleansings. Moreover R2P is defending an international moral system that includes the notions of democracy, peace inside and outside the state and humanism and of course the solidarity between the nations that are united in order to stand up for the civilian's rights. R2P is also defending the people's aspirations for democracy and free speech. The R2P was endorsed by the United Nation's General Assembly and the Security Council in 2005 and 2006 respectively and is regarded as a direct response to the humanitarian disasters³⁸ and also as an act of solidarity between the nations for the achievement of peace though at the same time R2P can be regarded as an infringement of the sovereignty of a state. As a result, there are born questions about how far can this protection from the R2P can go and also until which point the foreign countries can intervene at the domestic politics of a state? The fact that R2P encroaches the sovereignty of an independent country, is a huge challenge for the international community and make its application a very difficult task with dubious results. Is an international agreement saying that the war crimes will no longer be tolerated because from now on the international community will react rapidly. In the past R2P has been triggered for other cases that had been observed violation of human rights. An example is the action that the international community took for the Ivory Coast in 2010. From November 2010 until April 2011 after the presidential elections of 2010 in Ivory Coast the security forces of the former president Laurent Gbagbo attacked to the civilians³⁹. As a result, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1975 where the Responsibility to protect was invoked in order to protect the civilians from violence.

As far as, the case of Libya there was an R2Preaction due to the consequences of the Arab Spring in the country, although such reaction wasn't triggered in the neighborings Egypt and Tunisia mainly because the authoritarian regimes abandoned their seats rapidly. In Libya the Qaddafi regime remained in the power despite the protests, so now was the time for the international community to react. it had been preceded a great number of casualties of civilians during the clashes between the rebels and the Qaddafi forces since February of 2011 and also there was continually escalation of violence as it is referred above. The R2P was triggered mainly as a respond to the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the African Union's

³⁸ Daniel Silander "R2P- Principle or Practice? The UNSC on Libya" *Journal of Applied Security Research* , 8:2, 262- 284

³⁹ Information from the official site of the Responsibility to protect "Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect" http://www.globalr2p.org/regions/ca_te_divoire

calls for invasion in Libya⁴⁰. The role of these regional organizations was crucial. As at the beginning of the crisis on 22 February 2011 the Arab League postponed Libya's participation at the Union until the violence against the Libyan people stop⁴¹. Additionally, the next day the African Union condemned the excessive use of violence inside Libya against noncombatants and the violation of the international humanitarian law⁴² although Qaddafi was regarded as one of the greatest donors of the African Union. The Union was against the Qaddafi's Brutal response to the people that were protesting for the values of democracy, human rights, justice and they wanted reforms. The Gulf Cooperation Council also requested from the UN security council to take action and use "all the necessary measures to protect the civilians, including the installation of a no-fly zone in Libya". The Gulf Cooperation Council also claimed that Muamar Qaddafi had lost his legitimacy in Libya.

Moreover, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for the refugees, about 300.000 people fled Libya to the neighboring Egypt in order to escape from the violence inside the country⁴³. The R2P in Libya intended to stop Colonel Qaddafi from bombing the civilians and consequently to end the civil war as it seemed that the dictator was gaining ground at this battle clearly due to his aircraft superiority and not from the support coming from the crowds. Moreover, the rebels didn't have the equal arm equipment with the regime and they were condemned to be defeated. According to France's Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Jupee, NATO's decision for the intervention in Libya is just the effort for cease fire and it doesn't mean the declaration of war against Libya⁴⁴. One more goal of the R2P in Libya was the implement of the no-fly zone that was referred previously as through this it would be possible for the countries that were part of the attempt to distribute humanitarian aid to the civilians. The success of the R2P in Libya it was a matter of credibility for the international community because with the whole attempt in Libya the nations that joined the intervention were sending a strong message to the rest authoritarian regimes. The message was clear and was telling that the international community will no longer tolerate the authoritarianism and the violation of human rights because with the help of R2P such situations will stop.

Another one aspect for the justification of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine as far as the United States concerned was that through the R2P it was possible to be settled the international order easily. To be more specific, The U.S is used to see themselves as saviors of the smaller states and as the protectors of the stability in the world because they are a superpower. Moreover, in 2010 the NSS of the United States had stated that "the prevention of genocides and other atrocities is regarded as the national

⁴⁰ Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams "The New Politics of Protection? Cote d'Ivoire, Libya and the responsibility to protect " , *International Affairs*, 87:4, 2011

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ United Nation Data

⁴⁴ Daniel Silander "R2P Principle or Practice? The UNSC on Libya" *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 8:2, 262-284

interest of the United States⁴⁵”. As a result we can understand that the United States were amid supporters of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine because they deem it as a major pillar for the achievement of the international order in the world.

Redemption Politics⁴⁶

The term “Redemption Politics” is one of the reasons that led to the decision for the intervention in Libya as far as the U.S. The politics of redemption is used in order to indicate the reconsideration of the U.S foreign policy towards the Middle East during the period of Arab Spring. Specifically, in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt the US had decided to support the old regimes by not intervening and by not declaring their support to the protesters that demanded regime change. Moreover, the US reacted in a really slow as far as the Middle Eastern Affairs that period. The US didn’t support the overthrow of the long lived monarchist Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt despite that these cases were without a doubt popular demands. It seemed that U.S cared to maintain their interests in the region and they didn’t really care about the popular demands. However, the final result in Tunisia and in Egypt was the dethronement of the long time monarchs and the ascendance of the protesters. That meant that the people in the Middle East had the belief that the U.S were against the Muslim community and the Middle Eastern people and moreover the U.S did interventions in the Middle East only when there was vital interests for their country such as the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan.

When the time of Libya came, the United States had to prove that they were indeed the supporters of the values of democracy and human rights as they always claimed. Additionally, the U.S had also the chance to confirm their position as a superpower that represents the liberal democracy in every country no matter if is about a Western or Middle Eastern Muslim county. As a result, the U.S in the case of Libya supported from the beginning of the conflict the rebels in Benghazi and they did not tolerate the presence of Muamar Qaddafi in the country despite that he ruled the country for 42 years. The NATO intervention in Libya was USA’s final chance to prove that intervenes into countries in order to save the civilians and not their interests.

Defending U.S National Interests

Except from the Redemption Politics that helped the United States to find a pretext to invade Libya and also to attend supporters through the entire Muslim world, the United States also had some specific national interests to serve when they supported the decision for the intervention in Libya. The most important out of them are:

⁴⁵ Kevin Marsh “Leading from behind: Neoclassical Realism and Operation Odyssey Dawn” 2014, Defense and Security Analysis, 30:2, 120-132

⁴⁶ Fusun Turkmen, “From Libya to Syria: The rise and fall of Humanitarian Intervention?”, 2014 ACNUS Annual Meeting, Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

Regional Stability in the Middle East

After the developments that the Arab Spring brought on forth in Tunisia and in Egypt, the region of the Middle East and of North Africa (MENA) was regarded as a very unstable place. This happened because long time kingships and monarchies had been overthrown and during 2011 and the future of these countries was still vague and volatile. There wasn't any guarantee that would ensure that the overthrown of the Monarchs in Egypt and in Tunisia would safely lead to a democratical transition that would result into a stable regime in the South Mediterranean. This situation, without any doubt threatened the United States as their interests in this area were in a big danger. When the uprisings started in Libya, the United States saw it as their final chance to maintain their influence and not to lose completely contact with the Muslim World and the Arab people. . According to Kevin Marsh⁴⁷ , the main interests of the United States as far as the Middle East and their role there are broadened especially to the sectors of security, prosperity of the American economy, American values and international order. The U.S as a result regarded their duty to take the situation in Libya in their own hands otherwise there was the possibility of the domino effect. In other words if the U.S did not enforced the order in Libya through a direct intervention, the fear of the expansion of the violence in the neighboring countries was real. That means wider instability and this instability results also to a refugee and an energy crisis coming from the Mediterranean that the U.S as a superpower that can shape the international order, should not allow to happen.

Energy Security

With the military intervention in Libya the United States regarded that they protected their interests regarding the energy factor, a factor very important which can adjust the United States national economy without any doubt. Libya is a very important country that produces and distributes oil and is also a basic member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). We can conclude that whichever development in the country's domestic frame can easily affect the oil stability and the oil prices universally. Despite the fact that the United States is not a major importer of the Libyan oil mainly due to the geographical distance, a possible destruction of the country's oil infrastructure and the consequent halt of the oil distribution would be disastrous also for the economy of the United States. In other words the potential withdrawal of Libya from the international oil market would probably mean the increase of the oil prices at international level. As a result, all the countries would face the consequences of the Libyan civil war to their economies because the oil would be much more expensive than before. This situation is not convenience for any western country, including the United States. The US's foreign policy makers regarded that a direct military intervention in Libya would save the international oil market prices as at this case the domestic investments in oil

⁴⁷ Kevin Marsh "Leading from behind": Neoclassical realism and operation Odyssey Dawn, 2014, *Defense and Security Analysis*, 30:2, 120-132

infrastructures would not be harmed or destroyed and the oil would continue to circulate normally. Moreover the United States' policy makers at that specific time, regarded that they could communicate more easily with the rebels than with Qaddafi and that is the actual reason that decided to intervene by helping the Libyan rebels.

Circumstantial Reasons

One reason that Libya was the case that finally NATO intervened during the Arab Spring was the factor of the Libyan military forces. Specifically, Libya's military forces at 2011 were not regarded as strong modern and reliable in comparison with other Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt. The biggest part of Libya's armed forces was non-operational⁴⁸ and there were really big difficulties on the training. A big part of Libya's armed system was coming from the Soviet Union and due to that we can conclude that was obsolete and unable to cope with the NATO's latest army system. The actual structure of the military forces didn't help to the development of the Libyan army through the past years. To be more specific, the military was divided into many parts and moreover those parts did not have connection between them⁴⁹. The result was that there was not cohesion at the Libyan military because Qaddafi had divided the army into the regular army, which was used for the external defense of the country and to the security forces. The security forces were the Qaddafi regime's protection inside Libya and the first who fought for Qaddafi when the initial protests broke out on February 2011. The Libyan armed forces were obsolete since the Revolution of 1969 partly because its advance had never been included in Qaddafi's priorities as the colonel only looked after the paramilitary forces, the armed forces which actually was guarded the regime⁵⁰. When the uprisings broke out, Qaddafi tried to achieve the effectiveness of the Libyan military forces with indirect ways such as paying with extra money the militaries and cleansed the commanders that denied giving commands to kill the rebels in Benghazi⁵¹. One more reason why the Libyan army wasn't reliable during the civil war of 2011 was the fact that many militaries defected from the Libyan Armed Forces that period in order to attend the rebels. The Libyan armed forces in 2011 were characterized mainly by the general absence army standards due to the rare and poor services that the regime did for the maintenance of the equipment, the army had lack of efficiency and competence always in comparison with the other Middle Eastern countries⁵². As a result, despite the fact that the Qaddafi regime gained the power in Libya with a coup d'état, the army we conclude that wasn't the dominant element in the Libyan society. As far as the NATO forces that carried out the intervention, those were the completely opposite. NATO armed forces were provided with all the new technologies that included speed and intelligence to identifying the targets that they wanted to strike only by aircrafts and without having

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Zoltan Barany, "The role of the military", *Journal of Democracy*, 22:4, 24:35

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, "The role of the Libyan army in the revolt against Qaddafi regime" 16 March 2011

equipment landed in Libyan soil⁵³. In conclusion, the occasional fact that Libya had a weak and obsolete army in 2011, was a factor that helped NATO to take the decision to intervene in the country because it was obvious that Qaddafi's forces hadn't had the chance to win the battle against the latest arm technologies that NATO had at its disposal. We don't know if NATO would take so easily the decision to intervene in Libya if the country had a strong and reliable army that was equipped with the latest arms technology.

Refugee Crisis

The refugee crisis was one more very important and also crucial factor that led to the decision for NATO's intervention, as the escalated violence that was the result of the civil war in Libya made the Western allies but especially the Europeans to worry about the situation in Libya. The atrocities and the cruelty of the civil war forced a big part of the Libyan population to flee not only to their neighboring Arab countries of Egypt and Tunisia but also forced the Libyan people to cross the Mediterranean Sea and become illegal immigrants in European countries. Italy and France were the European countries that faced the results of the Libyan crisis in the biggest extent, always in comparison with the rest European countries. When on 25 of February 2011 in a press conference, the French officials, including and the French minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Jupee, were asked about the refugee crisis and the consequences of the destabilization of the countries of North Africa, Jupee's response was that "helping Tunisia, Egypt and Libya is in our places of interest"⁵⁴. The officials added also that they intent to be extremely strict with these countries as far as the illegal immigration issue. It was indeed a true belief that the Arab population that was coming from Libya and they faced the cruelty of the civil war, sooner or later would not have any other choice but to cross the Mediterranean Sea and o arrive at the Southern European Countries due to the obvious geographical proximity with the North Africa. As a result, we can conclude that the security of the borders was a crucial factor that led the countries of the European continent to vote in favor of the invasion in Libya during the NATO's voting. The European countries concerned that the NATO's intervention in Libya would bring a domestic stability in the country. By achieving this stability, the Libyan people would not have any longer any reason to abandon their homes and leave their country, Libya. Again we can conclude that the immigrant issue was just a pretext as France and Italy were able to find another ways to secure their borders to Mediterranean Sea. The stricter control of the borders of these countries and additionally the cooperation of all the Southern countries that emit in the Mediterranean Sea in order to discourage the immigrants from the idea of going to these specific countries would be a good solution. The direct military intervention it

⁵³The New York Times, "NATO war in Libya saws U.S Was vital to topping Qaddafi", Tom Shanker and Eric Schmitt, 21 October 2011

⁵⁴ Jason W. Davidson "France, Britain and the intervention in Libya: An integrated analysis, 2013, Cambridge Review of international Affairs, 26:2, 310:329

was not the only solution as far as the immigrant issue is concerned. But as it has already been mentioned, the process of decision making and the final decision is not only depended on just one factor, or just one country. The decision for the military intervention is the result of the balanced interests of all the countries that took the decision to stop the atrocities in Libya in March of 2011.

Conclusion

NATO's military intervention in Libya was a decision that mainly aimed to stop the civil war between the Qaddafi regime and the rebels of Benghazi. There were many reasons that contributed to that decision. The western countries believed that the new political situation that would result in Qaddafi's removal from Libya would express their interests in a better way as they had faced many difficulties with the Colonel and his anti-western behavior during the past years. The Arab countries also were avid supporters of this attempt because according to their point of view, Qaddafi's overthrow would help to the stability of the Middle Eastern region. In this dissertation were presented the factors that led to the NATO's intervention in Libya but among them the most important factor is the Western will to influence the region of the Middle East. To be more specific, the intervention in a big degree happened because the Western countries believed that they could benefit from Libya if Qaddafi was no more the ruler because by helping the rebels to win, the rebels would allow the western countries to exploit easier the country's natural resources. Although the bloodshed in Libya due to the civil war ended with NATO's intervention, there are still several questions about the success of this attempt as today, almost seven years after the intervention the country is regarded as a failed state despite all the efforts that happened for elections of representatives into the country.

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