

eman ta zabal zazu



Universidad del País Vasco    Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

**University of the Basque Country  
Faculty of Social and Communication Science**

**BACHELOR'S IN JOURNALISM  
2022-2023 ACADEMIC SEASON**

**RUDDERLESS LIBYA  
EXTERNAL POWERS AS PREDATORS OF A FAILED  
STATE**

**AUTHOR: GORKA UGALDE PÉREZ  
SUPERVISOR: LEIRE MOURE PEÑÍN**

Date: 12th May 2023

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

"The author of the dissertation declares that the information contained in this original and personal work is true, assuming otherwise the responsibilities that may arise from any inaccuracies that may appear in it: plagiarism, improper use of images, etc. All images are copyright of their corresponding owners and/or licensees. They are included in this work for purely informative purposes to illustrate the theoretical framework or analysis of the work."

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

## **ABSTRACT**

Libya remains trapped in a failed state status since the overthrow of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi following NATO's illegal intervention in 2011. The country is divided between the governments of Tripoli and Tobruk, both of which function in practice as independent states. Due to the country's valuable geo-strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea and its large oil and natural gas deposits, foreign powers play an active role, intervening directly or feeding their allied government, in order to gain influence in the region and protect their interests or damage those of their enemies. Libya thus is not just a land where the power vacuum is contested between various local factions that lay claim to it, but also the host of international struggles for hegemony in the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Middle East, and even the world, now that the global order is entering a multipolar era.

## **KEY WORDS**

Libya, Global Order, Proxy Wars, New Civil Wars, Regional Powers emergence, Failed State, Mediterranean Sea

Index

---

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Background and rationale for the topic.....	5
1.2 Problem definition and aims of the research.....	5
1.3. Hypothesis .....	6
1.4. Methodology.....	6
1.5. The plan of the project.....	7
<b>2. GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE LIBYAN CONFLICT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Global order, polarity, and the rise of Regional Powers.....	8
2.2 Proxy Wars and New Civil Wars.....	11
2.3 Failed State .....	14
<b>3. LIBYA, INSIDE THE STRUGGLE FOR GLOBAL HEGEMONY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Kremlin's ultimate goal in attacking Washington's unipolarity .....	18
3.2 Libya as an example of the patient construction of Chinese hegemony.....	22
3.3 Biting off more than it could chew: American Global Order crumbles down.....	24
<b>4. THE BATTLEFIELD FOR REGIONAL AMBITIONS... AND BEYOND .....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 The battle for the Mediterranean hegemony: Turkey and Egypt.....	29
4.1.1. Turkish protectorate of Tripolitania against isolation in the <i>Mare Nostrum</i> . 30	
4.1.2. Haftar, Cairo's protégé to counter Turkish menace.....	34
4.2 Struggle for Political Islam: United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia .....	36
4.2.1. Emirates: Between commercial dominance in the Sea and militarism .....	37
4.2.2. Qatari money and weaponry for Tripoli's militia oligopoly.....	38
4.3 The European silent fight: Italy and France.....	40
4.3.1. Rome's ambition to emerge as a European power .....	40
4.3.2. Arrogance and hypocrisy: the French loss of Africa.....	42
<b>5. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>48</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 Background and rationale for the topic

---

Libya is a North African country that has always been high on the international agenda, thanks to its geography and abundant natural resources. The disobedient and reactionary character of its leader since 1969, the Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, regarding the American World Order also made Libya an enemy to the United States and European powers. After the overthrow of Gaddafi's 42-year regime in 2011 by NATO-backed rebels in Benghazi, the territory seems to have completely collapsed. Instability reigns in a country that does not look like a country anymore. Its division into two governments –that one of Tripoli, recognised by the UN, on the one hand, and that one of Tobruk, on the other– with their respective military power, currency, ideology and allies.

There are at least 10 foreign states contributing militarily to the current Libyan conflict. This research, however, will focus on the main actors in the regional struggles in which Libya is a key piece, and on the global powers shaping the Global Order; Russia, China and the United States, bidding for world domination; Turkey and Egypt, pushing for the hegemony of the East Mediterranean; the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, fighting for the Political Islam and commercial influence in the region; Italy and France, aiming for the European leadership.

Several factors have driven the internationalisation of the Libyan war: the dismantling of American hegemony and the entrenchment of a more balanced multipolar international structure, the withdrawal of the United States from Libya, European paralysis, weakening and non-cooperation, the military adventurism of regional powers such as Turkey, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, and Russian and Chinese opportunism.

However, Libyan elites and local actors themselves also played a key role in the internationalisation of the conflict by soliciting and benefiting from foreign support for strategic purposes, such as militias aligned to international terrorist groups that control Tripoli, funded by Qatar and Turkey, or the leader of the Libyan National Army, Khalifa Haftar.

### 1.2 Problem definition and aims of the research

---

The central issue under study is the interference of foreign powers in the Libyan conflict. Many actors are involved, to a greater or lesser extent, through their proxies to satisfy their geopolitical interests in the territory. Based on this conception, and in order to deepen our knowledge of this fact, this study has the following objectives the following objectives are set out in this study:

- Firstly, the main objective will be to show the level of involvement of each actor, which are crucial and which are not so crucial, what relations they have with their proxies and what circumstances have led them to intervene in the Libyan war.
- In addition, the following specific objectives are proposed:
  - To define the concepts of Global Order, polarity, the emergence of Regional Powers, Proxy Wars and New Civil Wars and State Failure from a theoretical point of view, and in the historical and political context of the current situation in Libya.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- To analyse the attitudes, alliances, and interests of the three main Global Powers of the current multipolar system in Libya, i.e., Russia, China, and the United States, and to learn how important is Libya on the international stage.
- To examine Libya's regional weight, expressed in the interests, actions and confrontations that the Regional Powers maintain in the territory, mainly Turkey, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Italy, and France.
- To study the consequences that external involvement and the nurturing of their competing proxies has had on Libya's instability and State Failure.

### 1.3. Hypothesis

---

The hypotheses put forward for this study are as follows:

H.1. Interference by foreign global and regional powers, motivated by political, economic, and strategic interests, has kept the Proxy War and New Civil War dynamics in Libya going. The longevity of the conflict prevents the country from overcoming the chronic instability and endless conflict in which it has found itself since 2011.

H.2. Libya is not just another territory on the international stage, mainly due to its location and abundant natural resource deposits. The country is thus a reflection of the dynamics of the current multipolar order and an indicator of the state in which each power finds itself in the global and regional framework. As a result, Libya will be decisive in the rise of the actor that will emerge as a great power during and after this new multipolar era.

### 1.4. Methodology

---

The methodology chosen for this study was documentary research, based on bibliographical analysis and monitoring of the conflict in the media. This documentary search was carried out in databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, ResearchGate or Academia.edu, as well as institutional portals, such as the UN, EU or national defence departments of several countries analysed in this research. Many organisations, magazines and websites of conflict analysis were also used, such as the International Crisis Group, New America, Foreign Affairs or ISPI, and also digital media dealing with geopolitical issues, such as, POLITICO, The New York Times, The Guardian, Al Jazeera, Descifrando la Guerra, Atalayar, The Washington Post, Reuters, France 24, and media operating in Libya; for instance, The Libya Observer LibyaHerald, Middle East Eye or Middle East Monitor.

This provided access to a large number of articles in a wide variety of languages: English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Hungarian, Hungarian and Italian. A few authors, experts in the field, stand out for their great contribution to this work, i.e. Frederic Wehrey, Anna Molnár, Patrick Wintour, Nektaria Stamouli, Abdulkader Assad or Margarita Arredondas.

The main documentary sources have been books, reports and research studies carried out by renowned academics and researchers. by academics and researchers of recognised prestige. Such as:

- *La Guerra civile in Libia, Dalla caduta di Gheddafi al governo Draghi (2011-2021)* by Sofia Cecini, has been a relevant book for the development of the work, especially to understand and deepen

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

the chronology of the conflict and to understand its geographic dynamics.

- *Le Guerre illegali della Nato* by Daniele Ganser, has been used to build the background and origins of the crisis, and to complement the explanation of some theoretical concepts.
- Some
- Some studies such as *The Internationalisation of the Conflict in Libya* by Anna Molnár et al., *Libya: From Intervention to Proxy War* by Karim Mezran and Elissa Miller and *Fragmentation of Peacemaking in Libya: Reality and Perception* by Jalel Harchaoui and Bernardo Mariani, deal with the overall role of each actor in the conflict, even those with a minor role; in addition, it also explains the concepts of Proxy Wars and New Civil Wars. From the other hand, *This War is Out of our Hands* by Frederic Wehrey, is very detailed study of the relations between powers and their proxies, and diplomatic efforts and actors' ambitions.
- **LIBYA: THE FIRST TOTALLY PRIVATIZED WAR IN MODERN HISTORY** by Javier Martín, helped to understand the interest and will of private corporations in Libya and their involvement in the crisis.
- To discuss the accords, reactions and consequences of one of the most important facts of the work, the maritime treaty between the Tripoli government and Turkey, *The Perils of the Turkey-Libya Maritime Delimitation Deal* by Gallia Lindenstrauss. et al. has been very useful.

### 1.5. The plan of the project

---

In terms of structure, the work is divided into five fundamental blocks. Following this first introductory chapter, the theoretical concepts of the research are analysed and classified, such as the World Order, polarity, the raise of Regional Powers, Proxy Wars and New Civil Wars, and State Failure. This is accompanied by a historical and analytical framework that help to understand the background of the current political situation in Libya.

The third chapter examines the roles of the major global powers, and how their ambitions for world dominance are represented in their attitudes, actions, and relations with their proxies in the Libyan conflict.

Finally, how the emergence of Regional Powers influences the development of the Libyan crisis. The land's strategic and economic value is impossible to ignore for these actors fighting for the hegemony of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa region and the European Union.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

## 2. GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS IN THE LIBYAN CONFLICT

---

The conceptual framework will explain the four elements on which the work will orbit around throughout its development: polarity, Proxy Wars, New Civil Wars and State Failure. The United States (US), as the hegemonic power, has been establishing the political agenda and the values of the last 30 years. However, now that this unipolarity has been broken due to the rise of Anti-Western powers, namely China and Russia, where Washington once dominated, a vacuum of power emerged. Consequently, Regional Powers started involving heavily in these rudderless countries, leading to Proxy Wars.

This foreign policy tool was common in a bipolar context during the Cold War, but it has been demonstrated it also worked after 1991 inside a unipolar context. In fact, its use became widespread between many actors in order to gain some economic, political or strategy benefits and has been shown to work in a hegemonic scene as well.

This tendency brought inevitably many territories towards the State Failure, because of Proxy Wars. On the contrary, other theories state that it is the Failed State the reason to bring the internationalised conflict into a country. According to this, civil wars lead to State Failure and foreign powers are forced to intervene so that insecurity and violence do not spill across borders and affect regional security. Hence, since 2003 the Proxy Wars have become New Civil Wars.

In this chapter, theoretical explanations will be accompanied by empirical examples of the Libyan case, and how all these theories apply to the past and present dynamics of the North African country.

### 2.1 Global order, polarity, and the rise of Regional Powers

---

Unipolarity is the form of world order where hegemony is the domain exercised by a certain world power that can organize, articulate and enforce the general rules of the system.<sup>1</sup> Further, in Antonio Gramsci's words, hegemony is the cultural rules that the social structures establish, with which it imposes a particular vision and ideas as something natural, inevitable, and good.<sup>2</sup> The unipolar power extends through three main dimensions of power – doctrine-political, economic, and military–. However, it chiefly establishes the global agenda, reinforcing and promoting a specific rhetoric, and therefore attributing biased meanings to abstract words that, instead of being open to interpretation of each, they become objective concepts and that justify the world order.

Nevertheless, the unipolar international system did not arrive until the bipolar structure, where international structure is balanced between two main great powers and their allies, came apart in December 1991 when the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) collapsed. This fact symbolized the end of the bipolar world born after the Second World War (WWII). The US was left alone with no competitors as the only great power in the new founded unipolar era,

---

<sup>1</sup> Pérez García, J. A. *Unipolaridad y hegemonía imperialista. ¿Sin respuesta?*, CIEM, 2017, pp. 1–6, accessed 27 February 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Holsti, K. J. "The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory"; Mansbach, R. *American Political Science Review*, vol. 8, no.1, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985, pp. 368–369, accessed 27 February 2023.



## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

demonstrating its strength and international legitimation in the Gulf War in 1991.<sup>3</sup>

American hegemony stretched across the whole planet, as well as its force establishing military bases in all corners of the world and expanding the number of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members and alliances –chiefly towards East Europe–. Meanwhile, the Globalisation boosted the expansion of the neoliberal dominance on ideas, media, Internet and entertainment and culture, through transnational economic organisations such as World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Forum (WEF), and so forth.<sup>4</sup>

As said before, the US gained such hegemonic power, with such immeasurable power of decision and action, that it established a new narrative and semantic rules, originated at the end of the Cold War. This rhetoric penetrated the society through the media, entertainment, and culture. The best examples are words like freedom, democracy, civilisation, international community, least-developed country, the free world, among other expressions.<sup>5</sup>

As a matter of fact, another factor to understand how hegemony works, is what Peter Van Ham called social power; that is, is the ability of a state on the global stage to determine what is considered legitimate in the domain of international relations. This power is only effective if the international structure moves within the tracks imposed by communication –media, think tanks, entertainment...– and the cooperative relations between countries –transnational organisations, diplomatic summit, forums... –.<sup>6</sup>

The escalation of tensions between the US and Libya in 1986 is a clear example of this. On April 5, three US soldiers were killed in a terrorist attack in a nightclub in West Berlin. President Ronald Reagan accused Libyan intelligence of being behind the action and ordered a military operation called *El Dorado Canyon*, with which they carried out a series of air strikes against Benghazi and Tripoli, the capital of the African country, which occurred on April 15. Libya suffered dozens of civilian and military casualties, including the adopted daughter of its leader, Muammar Gaddafi.<sup>7</sup>

The attack was illegal since no country can bomb another without a mandate from the UN Security Council (UNSC). However, President Reagan supported his action by the Article 51 of the UN Charter, which allows “the right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the UN”, even though the terrorist attacks against citizens in a

---

<sup>3</sup> Varsori, A. *Relazioni internazionali dopo la guerra fredda. 1989-2022*, Il Mulino, 2022, pp.15-40, accessed 27 February 2023.

<sup>4</sup> López Villafaña, V. “El mundo unipolar y las condiciones y límites de la globalización”, *CONfinés de relaciones internacionales y ciencia política*, Vol. 1, Nº 1, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, 2006, pp. 31–49, accessed 28 February 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Magyar, B.; & Madlovics, B. “Trapped in the Language of Liberal Democracy”, *A Concise Field Guide to Post-Communist Regimes: Actors, Institutions, and Dynamics*, Central European University Press, 2022, pp. 3–8, accessed 2 March 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Anzera, G; & Massa, A. *Media Diplomacy e narrazioni strategiche. Autorappresentazione dello Stato e attuazione della politica estera in rete*, Bonnanno, 2017, pp.40–45, accessed 2 March 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Ganser, D. *Le guerre illegali della NATO*, Le Terre, 2022, pp. 366–370, accessed 2 March 2023.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

foreign country are not considered as such in the article. Days later, despite the UN resolution condemning the attack, the veto imposed by the three NATO member states permanently present in the UNSC – US, United Kingdom, and France – caused it not to be approved. Yet, it would have been inconceivable that an African country as Libya would have gotten away with a UN condemn if it had bombed or stroked back in Washington.<sup>8</sup>

Social power, within a framework of unipolar hegemony, grants a great power the ability to sell its version of events without anyone questioning it and to impose a hierarchy and privileges on certain states, ideas and organisations over others that do not deserve more than destruction. The subordination of the media to the hegemonic power is what mainly transmits biased rhetoric to the population and organisations such as NGOs to believe that, in this case, the US was attacking Tripoli, the capital of a UN member state, for justice and freedom.<sup>9</sup>

These dynamics intensified after the attacks in New York on 11th September 2001 (9/11). The White House saw an opportunity to justify its presence as a global authority even more with the so-called War on Terror. Washington's efforts to build its role as global justice and peacemaker paid off, and with this event the American tutelage of the world, also known as Responsibility to protect doctrine (R2P), became an unquestionable, irrefutable, and even necessary policy. This also had repercussions on American soil, since Congress accepted the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act –also known as USA PATRIOT Act– processed by the Government of George W. Bush, with which it imposed its rhetoric by force legislatively with censorship, torture, and espionage.<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, from a social Darwinian perspective, Western countries are protecting their population from evil, but they are also saving those countries that supposedly produce terror from their own irrationality and savagery, bringing progress and democracy to their people. Neoliberal states thus act as holy saviours and evangelizers of democratic modernity, no matter how many massacres, invasions or pain they cause, to help these underdeveloped and barbaric societies that have not yet reached the End of History, in the words of Francis Fukuyama.<sup>11</sup>

However, the harsh crisis of 2008 that shook the global financial system, together with the military and economic efforts, added to the loss of popularity of the American people and the rise of Euroscepticism and far right parties in the EU, Washington's key ally, American hegemony began to show signs of decline. On the contrary, the People's Republic of China (PRC), after embracing world trade and penetrating the European and African economies, has considerably soared its influence, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, when US suffered great economic stagnation and deep political

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*. pp. 369, accessed 2 March 2023.

<sup>9</sup> "Anzera, G; & Massa, A. *Media Diplomacy...*" *Op. cit.* pp.40-45, accessed 2 March 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Ramonet, I. *Guerras del siglo XXI. El imperio contra Irak*. DEBOLSILLO, 2004, pp.58–64, accessed 4 March 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Mishra, K. P. "Fukuyama's End of History: Triumph of the Liberal State", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 68, no. 3, 2007, pp. 465–474, accessed 4 March 2023.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

instability, and after Black Lives Matter protests and the Capitol attack in January 2021.<sup>12</sup>

The American national security enterprise, however, has been slow to adjust its strategies to the new and challenging multi-actor dynamics that have gradually taken shape in the international scene. Russia has seen cleverly the chance and openly challenged US hegemony on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022, when the Kremlin ordered the execution of the *Special Military Operation* to invade Ukraine. The end of unipolarity has become one of Moscow's primary ideological goals in international relations in recent years<sup>13</sup>. Washington is now making a desperate attempt not to lose its European allies and to counter the rise of an anti-Western coalition, since the shift of policy by the main oil and gas produced Gulf countries towards Beijing is raising concerns. In addition, now, with the bankruptcy of Silicon Valley Bank and the ripple effect it may create in the rest of the Western economies, the future of the empire of the White House continues to darken.

From the other hand, the defeats in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and the subsequent withdrawal of the troops, left the West-friendly Governments very weakened and with poor legitimation from the society. As unipolarity lost its footing around the world, the power vacuum gave rise to different candidates to fill that vacancy. This was the perfect condition for the instability of these regions, as well as control over their rich natural resources, to end up inside the context of conflicts between Regional Powers.<sup>14</sup>

Due to its rich natural resources and strategic location, Libya is not just another piece on the international chessboard. The country has become the battleground for the hegemony of the Mediterranean Sea, as well as the connector to sub-Saharan Africa, and the oil, gold, scrap metal, and natural gas fields. Libya is also a new opportunity for Regional Powers to strengthen influence and spread their ideas in North Africa or to weaken enemies who have intervened in the territory. For example, the most prominent conflicts, which we will discuss below, are between United Arab Emirates (UAE) versus Qatar, Italy versus France, and Egypt against Turkey.<sup>15</sup>

Howbeit, this consequently leads to the decomposition of the sovereignty of Libya and the division of the monopoly of violence. External actors take over the control of the resources and the economy, and use the local Governments, that in theory should represent people's will, to achieve and protect their interests.

### 2.2 Proxy Wars and New Civil Wars

---

The conflicts of the early 21st century have become the military need for external actors to intervene in countries that challenged their hegemony, and in which there is a seductive opportunity to achieve their goals in the geopolitical board. Proxy Wars are alliances formed by state and non-state actors

---

<sup>12</sup> "Varsori, A. *Relazioni internazionali dopo...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 170-230, accessed 27 February 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Black, M.; & Obradovic, L. "Multi-actor deterrence defining the concept", *Æther: A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2022, pp. 69–80, accessed 4 March 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Destradi, S. "Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony, and leadership", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2010, pp. 903–930, accessed 4 March 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Feuer, S. et al. *Libya: A Violent Theater of Regional Rivals*, Institute for National Security Studies, 2019, pp. 1–6, accessed 5 March 2023.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

possessing asymmetric capabilities and involving the exchange of resources. The relationship between both actors is similar to outsourcing: a major power provides a group involved in the conflict with funding, weapons, and access to bases, but not its own troops, in exchange for agreeing to fight in its place in the conflict.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the interests of external patrons and the degree of control they exert over their representatives, it is also necessary to consider how these external interests interact with the reality of pre-existing political currents, economic interests, and cultural and religious practices. In this context, local actor aims to enlist external support to pursue local goals, and the objective of a foreign power is to enlist local actors in the pursuit of external interests. The solid and long-lasting relationship between external states and the belligerent actors and the constant flow of money, weapons and troops causes the conflict to lengthen in time as well.<sup>17</sup>

This method of warfare became the expression of the Balance of Power between USSR and US during the Cold War, with which they avoided a full-scale nuclear conflict. Allied land battles were used to weaken their adversary without going through a direct conflict, just supporting one side or the other. The Proxy Warfare strategy provided the opportunity to increase foreign policy advantages without the survival of the state itself being at risk. This made it possible to progressively gain shares of power without causing great damage to the country, as well as having the option of opening diplomatic channels more easily.<sup>18</sup>

After USSR disappeared, US implemented this kind of warfare after 11/9. Many of these current conflicts arise out of a civil war, which due to external interests flares up and becomes embroiled in Proxy Wars dynamics. Hence, internal rebellions or insurgencies end up into full-scale internationalised conflicts with foreign powers involved, each one fighting indirectly through *guerrillas*, local militaries, militias, terrorist groups, and private military companies. Consequently, Proxy Wars condemn the countries that suffer the conflicts to a long-lasting instability that eventually make their sovereignty disintegrate, in favour of outsider actors with exclusive motivations fighting each other in a foreign land.<sup>19</sup>

Civil wars thus can no longer be understood as an internal conflict, but as a new type of war that is neither a classical civil war nor a classical international war, i.e., how the concept of New Civil Wars appears. This term explains the multiplicity of types of combatant units, both public and private, state and non-state, or a mixture of all of them, that are present in the civil wars since the Iraq War in 2003.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Chamorro, A. *Proxy War: conflictos a la sombra de las potencias*, Descifrando la Guerra, 2020, accessed 5 March 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Gopal, A; & Hodge, J. *A Network View of Syria's Proxy War*, New America, 6 April 2021, accessed 5 March 2023. <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/social-networks-class-and-the-syrian-proxy-war/>.

<sup>18</sup> "Chamorro, A. *Proxy War...*" *Op. cit.* accessed 5 March 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Kozera, C.A., et al. *Game of Proxies – Towards a new model of warfare: Experiences from the CAR, Libya, Mali, Syria, and Ukraine*, Security & Defence Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 4, December 2020, pp. 78–84, accessed 5 March 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Kaldor, M. "Organized Violence in a Global Era", *Perspectives*, no. 19, 2002, pp. 106–108, accessed 5 March 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23615979>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Most of these types of wars are located in Muslim-majority countries, previously ruled by authoritarian regimes. Moreover, most rebel groups fighting in these conflicts pursue radical Islamist goals, with an international rather than regional perspective. This is one of the biggest differences from the Proxy Wars of the Cold War. These wars are also characterised by their persistence over time and the difficulties of reaching negotiated settlements.<sup>21</sup>

The Syrian conflict is the best example; it began as a mass uprising in the frame of the Arab Springs. Within months, the movement for democratic reform mutated into an Islamist armed struggle to overthrow President Al Assad. The early influence of Regional Powers soon escalated the conflict into a devastating civil war, and to a free ground for Islamist radicalization –which would become internationalized with Islamic State (IS) spreading across Syria and Iraq– and, above all, one of the most complex and far-reaching Proxy Wars in 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>22</sup>

The external impact is such that even Al Assad's opposition camp was divided. The US-Saudi-Jordanian alliance supported, in many cases independently, various types of actors in the uprising: from liberals and Kurds from Rojava, to Salafis and tribal figures. On the other hand, Turkey, Qatar, and Sudan chose to back Islamist forces that were based on or descended from Muslim Brotherhood-related networks. In support of the Baath Party regime, on the contrary, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah positioned themselves.<sup>23</sup>

In the Libyan case, in 2014 began the First Civil War after the NATO intervention in 2011, as none of the newly created authorities could achieve full legitimacy of the country. Therefore, Libya was divided into 3 parts, adopting an organization similar to that of the time before the Italian colonization; Tripolitania –government recognized by the UN, expressed in the General National Congress (GNC)– Cyrenaica and Fezzan –populated mostly by Berber, Tuareg and Tabu communities–. Although each part had different states, in practice each zone functioned as independent entities. The closing of borders between the territories, as well as the distinction of currency and passport, proved this. Moreover, they were also fighting against each other, as was evident when Khalifa Haftar, Commander of the self-proclaimed Libyan National Army (LNA), launched a military attack on Tripoli based UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in April 2019, to retake the country *manu militari*.<sup>24</sup>

Tripolitania has the support of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and the UN, and represents *de jure* Libya's executive body in the recently founded Government of National Unity (GNU), in replace of the GNA. On the other hand, the House of Representatives (HoR), Tobruk based –Cyrenaica–, expresses the legislative body, and it maintains support from Egypt, the UAE, Greece, and Russia. HoR also has the control of the LNA, since Tripolitania lacks a regular army and remains with a factional violence under control of Islamist militias. Although both should work together, neither recognizes each other and

---

<sup>21</sup> Walter, B. F. "The New Civil Wars", *Annual Report of Political Science*, vol 20, 27 February 2017, pp. 469–486, accessed 5 March 2023. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full>.

<sup>22</sup> Crosston, M. D. "Cold War and Ayatollah Residues: Syria as a Chessboard for Russia, Iran, and the United States", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2014, pp. 94–111, accessed 7 March 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26270818>.

<sup>23</sup> "Gopal, A; & Hodge, J. *A Network View ...*" *Op. cit.* pp.11.

<sup>24</sup> Molnár, A. et al "The Internationalisation of the Conflict in Libya", *AARMS*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Academic and Applied Research in Military (AARMS) and Public Management Science, 2021, pp. 101, accessed 7 March 2023. <https://www.proquest.com/openview>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

currently Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh is leading the GNU with no approval by the HoR.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the UN arms embargo in place since 2011, that prohibits weapon transfers to Libya –except to the GNA/GNU only with the approval of a UNSC committee– every single authority that has existed and has existed since 2011 in Libya has received military supplies of all kinds and even the construction of military bases from foreign powers in their own land.

### 2.3 Failed State

The concept of State Failure has multiple interpretations and approaches, closely linked to the New Civil War concept. One of them proposes that a state could be recognised as a failure when basic statal functions are no longer operating, or they do it weakly. It could still possess the monopoly of violence, as well as an active army, but the impossibility to provide a political structure and efficient institutional mechanisms, generates a scenario where rule of law does not have a relevant presence.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, based on each states' sovereignty concept, that is exclusive control over a specific land and population, it gives to each state equal participants in the international system. Hence, the core of State Failure is the incapacity to control its borders and territory and uphold its monopoly of violence. Whenever there is a non-state entity –such as warlords, paramilitary groups, mafias, or terrorist groups– or a foreign State ruling over a considerable piece of land with the legitimisation of local citizens and organisations, the very legitimacy and power of the central state is doubtful, since it has lost the ability to control its own sovereignty within its borders.<sup>27</sup>

Starting from the base of the second approach, there are two main currents of thoughts that divide the academic community on the role of foreign intervention in the State Failure process; Rotberg suggests that it is the Failed State that leads to the intervention, when the consequences of the instability are noticeable on international security, and international powers are forced to interfere for a peacebuilding action<sup>28</sup>; from the other hand, as Chomsky pints out, the external intervention causes the State Failure, as interveners see an opportunity in the disorder to satisfy their strategic and economic interests.<sup>29</sup>

Both perspectives have their empirical basis. The former argues that as state institutions weaken, the likelihood of conflict spilling across borders into neighbouring countries increases. This causes local and external authorities ask

---

<sup>25</sup> Kishi, R.; & Jones, S. *Libya Most likely to see non-state armed group fragmentation and alliances*, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2019, pp. 4-8, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Eriksen, S. S. "“State failure” in theory and practice: the idea of the state and the contradictions of state formation", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2011, pp. 229–247, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*. pp. 229–247.

<sup>28</sup> Mohamed, I. M. G. "Foreign Intervention and the Process of State Failure Case Study on Libya", *CUNY Academic Works*, 2019, accessed 7 March 2023. [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc\\_etds\\_theses/806](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/806).

<sup>29</sup> Call, C. "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'". *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 8, 2008, pp. 1491–1507, accessed 7 March 2023.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

for international support, leading to external intervention. Then is when the conflict often becomes more violent and more difficult to control and resolve.<sup>30</sup>

This theory matches with the European-Atlantic idea that intergovernmental organisations like the UN, and especially NATO, have the legitimate role of international peacekeepers, responsible for ensuring that any kind of threat to peace or freedom within the Neoliberal Global Order shall be hunted down. As a matter of fact, in March 2011 UN authorised the international intervention in Libya<sup>31</sup>, in order to protect the civilians of Benghazi who had revolted on the *Day of Rage* the 17th February –6th anniversary of the death of 11 Libyan citizens during protests in Benghazi in front of the Italian consulate in 2006<sup>32</sup>– and to back up the formation of the National Transitional Council (NTC) in the same month. This council declared itself as the only recognizable executive of the country and began to organize into a functional government to replace Gaddafi's once the country was freed<sup>33</sup>.

The legitimacy of the Tripoli based government was even more threatened when the council gained international recognition from the UN, after the approval of the rebel government as legitimate and after it gave NTC the official seat of Libya in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The international community demanded an end to the massacres that organizations and media accuse Gaddafi of committing against his population, including airstrikes, as well as an opening to humanitarian aid and a transitional government to remove the dictator from power.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, Chomsky's vision is a much more critical vision, since it embodies in its thinking ideas chiefly from Structuralism and Marxism, but also from Realism. This view on international actors' motivations, also provides the adequate logic to understand the flaws of the unification process of Libya, and how both Western and Eastern regions were forced to unite against their will, during and after the Italian colonisation: Tripolitania –that is, Western region of the current Libya– had been under Ottoman rule since the 16th century; Cyrenaica –that is, Eastern region of the current Libya–, however, was made an administrative division in 1863, later in 1871 under Tripolitania's control<sup>35</sup>.

Italy, with big imperialist ambitions, won against Constantinople in 1912 and took over Tripoli and the entire coastline of the present Libya. On the contrary, the Senusiyya dynasty and the warrior Umar al-Mukhtar led a resistance against Rome in Cyrenaica, with British backup<sup>36</sup>, founding the Emirate of Cyrenaica. Italy, with Tripolitanian support, defeated them in 1932 and unified the colony. Moreover, the king Victor Emmanuel II obtained parts of

---

<sup>30</sup> Lobell, S. E; & Mauceri, P. *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics: Explaining Diffusion and Escalation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>31</sup> UN Press, *Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians*, 17 March 2011, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Cecinini, S. *La Guerra civile in Libia, Dalla caduta di Gheddafi al governo Draghi (2011-2021)*, 2021, pp. 43, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>33</sup> ntclibya.org. *Founding Statement of the Interim Transitional National Council | The Libyan Republic - The Interim Transitional National Council*, 10 March 2011, accessed 7 March 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Reuters. *Excerpts from Libya Contact Group Chair's Statement*, 25 July 2012, accessed 8 March 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-libya-meeting-excerpts-refile-idUKTRE76E3GJ20110715>.

<sup>35</sup> Anderson, L. *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980*, Princeton University Press, 1986, pp. 89, accessed 9 March 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Cristiani, D. "UK-Libya: the Consistency of Being Selective", *Analysis*, no. 238, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), 2014, pp.3, accessed 9 March 2023.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

the current region of Fezzan from French Algeria and French West Africa under the Versailles Treaty in 1919.<sup>37</sup>

The clash between East and West came back in the context of the Arab Springs, when the NTC –Cyrenaica– self-claimed to be the sole authority of the Libya in 2011, which eventually led to the division and confrontation of both sides. The only common bond that made both sides coexist since independence was personified in Gaddafi, as a unifying symbol of the nation. The high quality of life, economic prosperity, and the pacification that he achieved among the local tribes<sup>38</sup> kept Libya as the country with the highest Human Development Index (HDI) in Africa<sup>39</sup>.

However, Libyan policies were frowned upon in the eyes of Western countries, as Gaddafi intended to establish a pan-African currency based on the Libyan Dinar (LYD), in order to release West African countries from the yoke of the French franc (CFA). The *Qaid* –meaning “leader” in Arabic– counted with 143 tons of gold, and a similar amount in silver –valued at more than \$7 billion– to carry out his plan.<sup>40</sup>

President Nicolas Sarkozy took the initiative of the intervention by supporting the rebels who stood up in Cyrenaica looking for the maintenance of its power in West African countries, as well as extending its influence into North Africa and reinforce its dominant role in diplomatic management in the Arab springs<sup>41</sup>, from where France and other NATO allies could benefit from the rich shares of oil production. These motivations were captured in confidential emails of Hillary Clinton in 2011<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, the 143 tons of gold disappeared after the death of Gaddafi<sup>43</sup>.

In the aftermath of the Western illegal intervention, the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated GNC replaced the CNT in power. Yet, the 2014 elections changed the situation, as the remaining non-Islamist parties decided to leave the GNC and unite in the HoR. Thus, the antagonism between Tripoli and Cyrenaica escalated, with the GNC only retaining *de facto* rule over Tripolitania –until it was replaced by the GNA in 2016– and the HoR remaining the authority in the east.

Following this, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh was elected Prime Minister by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum (LPDF), driven by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in February 2021<sup>44</sup>, along with Mohamed Menfi as president, and approved by the HoR in March, which led to the formation of the

---

<sup>37</sup> Vandewalle, D. *A History of Modern Libya*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 34-46, accessed 9 March 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Chengu, G. *Gaddafi's Libya Was Africa's Most Prosperous Democracy*, Countercurrents.org, 12 January 2013, accessed 9 March 2023. <https://countercurrents.org/chengu120113.htm>.

<sup>39</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*, November 2010, pp. 142, accessed 10 March 2023. <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents>.

<sup>40</sup> WikiLeaks. *Hillary Clinton Email Archive*, 1 April 2011, accessed 10 March 2023. <https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/emailid/12659>.

<sup>41</sup> Wehrey, F. *The Burning Shores: Inside the Battle for the New Libya*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc, 2018, accessed 11 March 2023.

<sup>42</sup> “WikiLeaks. *Hillary Clinton Email...*” *Op. cit.*

<sup>43</sup> Süddeutsche Zeitung. *Where is Gaddafi's money?*, accessed 11 March 2023. <https://panamapapers.sueddeutsche.de>.

<sup>44</sup> UNSMIL. *Libyan Political Dialogue Forum*, accessed 15 March 2023. <https://unsmil.unmissions.org>.



RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

GNU with the aim of holding Libya-wide elections in December in order to reunify the two sides under one authority.<sup>45</sup>

Howbeit, Dbeibah failed to organise the elections, due to political disputes over candidate eligibility and legal challenges<sup>46</sup>, and in March 2022 a parallel Libyan interim government, known as Government of National Stability (GNS), was formed based in Sirte, led by Fathi Bashagha, and supported by the HoR and the LNA, and condemned by the UN<sup>47</sup>. This situation escalated and nearly led to a Third Civil War in August 2022. Hence, the unitary goal of the GNU has backfired, and Tripolitania and Cyrenaica remain as confrontational and autonomous as before.

The current disaster and fracture of Libya is the true expression of the artificial union that was generated during colonisation and maintained after independence, and of the benefit of the Western powers of an African country then and now. As stated above, each area is self-governing and functioning as an independent country.

Having explained the entire theoretical and historical context of the work, the project will work on the idea that the interventions and presence of foreign States and non-State actors are motivated by purely realistic impulses for material and political interests, and ruling out any ethical or humanitarian purpose, since they have no interest in finding a viable solution, but an outcome that benefits them.

---

<sup>45</sup> RFI. *Libya Lawmakers Approve Interim Govt in Key Step towards Elections*, 10 March 2021, accessed 15 March 2023. <https://www.rfi.fr>.

<sup>46</sup> Congressional Research Service. *Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy*, 3 January 2022, accessed 15 March 2023.

<sup>47</sup> Assad, A. *Bashagha's Government Sworn in at HoR in Tobruk*, The Libya Observer, 3 March 2022, accessed 15 March 2023. <https://libyaobserver.ly/news/bashaghas-government-sworn-hor-tobruk>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

### 3. LIBYA, INSIDE THE STRUGGLE FOR GLOBAL HEGEMONY

---

While Russia's large-scale illegal invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, may be the trigger for the beginning of the battle for the leadership of a new World Order, the right conditions for the construction of this multipolar context have been decades in the making.

Moscow and Beijing have gradually materialised an anti-Western front, to which the US has failed to react in time. The founding of the BRICS was not only intended as a diplomatic alliance against Washington, but also as a point of reference and an economic alternative to the US and the EU for the so-called *Global South*. Now that the masks have fallen, and there are no more fake friendships anymore, BRICS has recently announced its intention to create an alternative currency to the dollar (USD) as an international exchange currency. In case of its materialisation, it would be a major stab in the back for the West<sup>48</sup>, considering that it has been suffering from uninterrupted economic recession since 2008, aggravated by the Covid crisis and the Ukrainian war.

The White House's ability to lead or sustain peace negotiations is remarkably weakening as China recently brokered a peace between Iran and Saudi Arabia, bitter enemies for more than 40 years. This shows the changing attitudes of the wealthy Gulf states, which are side-lining Washington in favour of Beijing. Therefore, R2P dogma has become a heavy burden to carry for the US, as it has had to abandon occupied countries, leaving them alone in the face of predatory Regional Powers and rival superpowers such as China and Russia.

Along with Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria, Libya is one of those left over countries. However, there is a difference between them; the state that controls the territory will have a huge advantage over the other candidates in the race to be the world's new great power. Moreover, the conflict is a market of opportunities for the military industry and an enormous source of natural resources for the profit of international corporations<sup>49</sup>. This chapter will study the attitudes and relations that Russia, China, and the US have had in Libya with the different factions and actors within an international framework.

#### 3.1 Kremlin's ultimate goal in attacking Washington's unipolarity

---

Russia is an astute and reactionary actor. It has clear strategic interests in Libya that are not strictly military, but also aimed at projecting its power in an area of critical importance to Western interests and thwarting NATO's own actors challenging Moscow on its eastern front. Besides investing in oil facilities or signing arms and reconstruction deals, President Vladimir Putin's ambition is to use Libyan territory as a political bargaining tool to carry out a repositioning in the Mediterranean region.

The Libyan crisis provided Russia with a chance to recapture the role of its predecessor USSR, whose presence in anti-Western countries was considerable, with the stated geopolitical goal of gaining a Mediterranean port

---

<sup>48</sup> Sharma, M. *BRICS Common Currency Soon? India, China Step up to Counter US Dollar's Dominance*, WION, 3 April 2023, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.wionews.com/business-economy/brics-common-currency-soon-india-china-step-up-to-counter-us-dollars-dominance-578660>.

<sup>49</sup> Martín, J. *LIBYA: THE FIRST TOTALLY PRIVATIZED WAR IN MODERN HISTORY*, Novact, pp. 5, accessed 20 March 2023. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/shockmonitor\\_submission.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/shockmonitor_submission.pdf).

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

and military bases in the region<sup>50</sup>. Moscow, however, following a purely opportunistic strategy, did not support the rebellious NTC until it announced that all contracts signed during the Gaddafi era would be respected. Nonetheless, the Kremlin did not back Western side, as it also criticized the NATO operations against the *Qaid* and described them as having exceeded its mission according to the UNSC resolution to protect civilians<sup>51</sup>.

Russia thus pursues a more active foreign policy in the *Mare Nostrum* based on military, diplomatic and economic means, and uses the Proxy War in Libya to counter Western influence<sup>52</sup>.

The Tobruk-based internationally unrecognised Government has always received a firm Russian support and recognition, specifically for the Commander of the LNA, Khalifa Haftar. He has travelled many times to Russia; in fact, he was even invited to a ceremony aboard the Russian aircraft carrier *Admiral Kouznetsov* in January 2017. Putin's strong diplomatic rapport with the LNA chief is shown in military strength and experience on the ground, due in part to his support for improving the army with weapons and officer training in Russia to fight IS in the East and Fezzan<sup>53</sup>, in coordination with the Egyptian government since the foundation of the GNA in 2015<sup>54</sup> –violating the UN arms embargo–. In exchange of this, Moscow gets contracts to exploit oil, gas, gold, diamonds, nuclear energy and rare minerals for companies owned by *Russian Oligarchs* close to Putin, such as Rosneft, Lukoil, Zarubezhneft, Gazprom, Rosal or Rosatom<sup>55</sup>.

On top of that, the Eurasian giant has played a key role regarding economic and financial fields for Cyrenaica from 2014 onwards; the Kremlin printed billions of dollars' worth of Libyan banknotes for the Haftar-aligned government –precisely nearly USD 3 billion– for the Eastern parallel Central Bank of Libya in Bayda<sup>56</sup>, to compete against the LYD parallel issued by Tripoli<sup>57</sup>.

Russia maintained stable relations with Libya before 2011, albeit Gaddafi never allowed the Kremlin to open a naval base there. Now, however, this base could become real, which could make its influence expand over the region, further increasing Western concerns.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, Moscow also hopes to gain control of a critical refugee transit route to Europe, which mainly concerns Italy, Tripoli's main European partner.

---

<sup>50</sup> Stepanova, E. "Russia's Approach to the Conflict in Libya, the East-West Dimension and the Role of the OSCE"; A. Dessi; & E. Greco. *Search for Stability in Libya: OSCE's Role Between Internal Obstacles and External Challenges*, Istituto Affari Internazionali Research Studies, 2018, pp. 94–97, accessed 20 March 2023. <https://www.iai.it>

<sup>51</sup> Mezran, K; & Miller, E. *Libya: From Intervention to Proxy War*, Atlantic Council, 2017, pp. 4, accessed 20 March 2023. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org>

<sup>52</sup> Beccaro, A. *Foreign Actors in Libya's Crisis*, Atlantic Council & Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), 2017, pp. 91–111, accessed 21 March 2023.

<sup>53</sup> Dynier, A.M. "Russia's Libya Policy", *PISM Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 1252, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych (PISM), 15 January 2019, pp.1–2, accessed 22 March 2023. <https://pism.pl>

<sup>54</sup> Aman, A. *Egypt Acts as Middleman for Russia-Libya Arms Deal*, Al-Monitor, 19 February 2015, accessed 22 March 2023. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/02/egypt-efforts-libya-army-russia-weapons.html>.

<sup>55</sup> "Martín, J. *LIBYA: THE FIRST...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Lewis, A. *Separate banknotes symbols of Libyan disunity, financial disarray*, Reuters, 3 June 2016, accessed 22 March 2023. <https://www.reuters.com>

<sup>57</sup> "Cecinini, S. *La Guerra civile...*" *Op. cit.* pp.124.

<sup>58</sup> "Molnár, A. et al "The Internationalisation of..." *Op. cit.* pp. 107–108.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Russia's eventual strength in Libya could fulfil an important objective of Putin's policy of destabilising and dividing the UE.<sup>59</sup>

From the other hand, the reports with the UN-brokered GNA have been difficult. Despite officially recognising Tripoli, supporting militias of Misrata and backing the idea of a unified Libyan state, Russian Government does not have a permanent diplomatic mission located there since 2013, after the evacuation of the embassy due to gunmen attack<sup>60</sup>. Moscow also started to support some political figures in Tripolitania, in case they come to power, such as Muammar Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, and Aref Ali Nayed, who is close to Haftar<sup>61</sup>.

In February 2017, President of GNA, Fayez al-Sarraj, requested Russia to mediate negotiations between Tobruk and Tripoli. Talks were held in Moscow in March, between Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, and a GNA delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister, Ahmed Maiteeq, and Foreign Minister, Mohamed Siala. GNA's initiative to sit with Russia was motivated by the idea of improving relations with the Kremlin in response to its growing ties with the HoR. In this way, Russia wanted to convey the image of a peace-broker, a friend of the countries of the *Global South*, in a conflict generated by NATO. Reportedly, there are at least 500 and up to 800 or even thousands of Russian mercenaries in Tripoli<sup>62</sup>.

Russia's apparent neutral position vanished when the Kremlin sent regular soldiers to Libya in September 2019 to support Haftar's forces during their offensive against Tripoli in 2019<sup>63</sup>. In addition, Moscow held up the UN resolution on 7 April demanding that the LNA halt its assault on the GNA in 2019. Hundreds of mercenaries from the Wagner Group were also sent to Libya at the time<sup>64</sup>.

Founded in 2014 by Russian businessman Yevgeniy Prigozhin –a close associate of President Vladimir Putin<sup>65</sup>– the Warner Group is a private military company with close ties to the Kremlin. Its aim is none other than to consolidate Moscow's presence on the international stage. According to certain reports, mercenaries of the Russian Wagner Group have been backing the LNA from 2018 in Libya, represents a serious threat to the strategic interests of the US

---

<sup>59</sup> Warsaw Institute. *Civil War in Libya. Russian Goals and Foreign Policy*, 30 April 2019, pp. 20–21, accessed 24 March 2023. <https://warsawinstitute.org>

<sup>60</sup> Grove, T. *Russia Says Embassy Staff in Libya Evacuated after Attack*, Reuters, 3 October 2013, accessed 24 March 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-libya-embassy-idUSBRE9920GU20131003>.

<sup>61</sup> Meyer, H. *Russia Supports Political Role for Qaddafi's Wanted Son in Libya*, Bloomberg, 24 December 2018, accessed 24 March 2023. <https://www.bloomberg.com>

<sup>62</sup> Salyk-Virk, M. *Airstrikes, Proxy Warfare, and Civilian Casualties in Libya*, New America, June 2020, pp. 35, accessed 25 March 2023. <https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net>

<sup>63</sup> Suchkov, M.A. *Analysis: Reports on Russian troops in Libya spark controversy*, Al-Monitor, 12 October 2018, accessed 25 March 2023. <https://www.al-monitor.com>

<sup>64</sup> The Libya Observer. *300 Russian mercenaries fighting for warlord Khalifa Haftar in Libya, western news reports say*, 4 March 2019, accessed 25 March 2023. <https://libyaobserver.ly>

<sup>65</sup> Preussen, W. *Russian Oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin Admits He Created the Mercenary Wagner Group*, POLITICO, 26 September 2022, accessed 26 March 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/yevgeny-prigozhin-admits-that-he-created-the-wagner-group/>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

and its allies, as well as in other Sahelian and Sub-Saharan countries and Syria.<sup>66</sup>

The relationship between the presence of Wagners on the Libyan soil and the production and export of Libyan gas is completely connected. The war in Ukraine put Europe's energy vulnerability on the table, and the old continent is now looking for other sources of gas and petroleum. Libya is one of them; in fact, in January 2023 Italian Prime Minister, Georgia Meloni, and the GNU Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, signed an \$8 billion gas production deal, aimed at boosting energy supplies to Europe through Italian energy company National Hydrocarbon Corporation (Eni) and the Libyan National Oil Corporation (NOC)<sup>67</sup>. The competition with European companies is also foreseeable in this area, as Gazprom's negotiations with the NOC began in 2018.

Most of the country's gas –Murzuq, Kufra, Cyrenaica and the Gulf of Sirte<sup>68</sup>– and oil refineries lie in LNA-controlled territory –Ras Lanuf, Tobruk, Brega and Sarir<sup>69</sup>–. This explains the importance of the presence of Wagner mercenaries, as they have been operating in the vicinity of gas fields in the east of the country. For instance, the two main Libyan gas extraction fields –the al-Wafa field, 500 kilometres southwest of the Libyan capital Tripoli and close to the border with Algeria, and the al-Fargh field, close to the eastern city of Ajdabiya– are located in territories controlled by the Wagner Group and outside the central control of Tripoli<sup>70</sup>. In any case, the Russian presence in Sirte prevented a potential large-scale conflict between Turkey and Egypt in July 2020<sup>71</sup>.

Nevertheless, the unexpected Russian effort in Ukraine is putting Moscow's external deployments to the test, and many Wagner Group fighters have been moved from Libya, as well as from the Central African Republic and Syria to help reinforce Russian struggle in Ukraine<sup>72</sup>. The Wagner Group also functions as a connector between territories where it is present. After Haftar's visit to the Russian Embassy in Saudi Arabia in March 2023<sup>73</sup>, in April 2023 the neighbouring Sudan again erupted in violent clashes with a high death toll. Several media reports suggest that Haftar had sent at least one shipment of weapons to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of the Commander Hemedti and

---

<sup>66</sup> Faulkner, C. et al. "Undermining Democracy and Exploiting Clients: The Wagner Group's Nefarious Activities in Africa"; Cruickshank, P. *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel at West Point*, vol. 15, no. 6, 19 July 2022, pp. 16, accessed 26 March 2023. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu>

<sup>67</sup> Al Jazeera. *Italy's Eni Signs \$8bn Gas Deal with Libya amid Energy Crunch*, 22 January 2023, accessed 26 March 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/28/italys-meloni-in-libya-to-conclude-8bn-gas-deal>.

<sup>68</sup> Fuente Cobo, I. *Libya, an Energy Opportunity for Europe and for Spain*, Atalayar, 6 December 2022, accessed 27 March 2023. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/libya-energy-opportunity-europe-and-spain>.

<sup>69</sup> Energy, Capital & Power. *Refineries in Libya by Capacity*, 13 August 2021, accessed 27 March 2023. <https://energycapitalpower.com/refineries-in-libya-by-capacity/>.

<sup>70</sup> Belmonte, N. *The Wagner Group in Libya: An Added Problem for Gas Exports to Europe*, Atalayar, 29 September 2022, accessed 27 March 2023. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/wagner-group-libya-added-problem-gas-exports-europe>.

<sup>71</sup> Descifrando la Guerra. *Analizando - Libia hacia una nueva guerra civil*, 2 September 2022, accessed 27 March 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qbmcff4HcUE>.

<sup>72</sup> "Faulkner, C. et al. "Undermining Democracy and..." *Op. cit.* pp. 16.

<sup>73</sup> Matthews, S. *Cables Reveal Secret Preparations for Haftar's Visit to Russian Aircraft Carrier*, Middle East Eye, 2 March 2023, accessed 28 March 2023. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/libya-haftar-russia-aircraft-carrier-visit-cables-reveal-preparations>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

some flights from LNA airbases were organised by the Wagner Group. According to the UN, in 2019 1.000 Sudanese RSF soldiers were deployed to Libya by Hemedti to assist the LNA in its battle against Tripoli.<sup>74</sup>

In short, after the Revolution and NATO's intervention in 2011, Russia saw an opportunity to pursue its hostile agenda against every remaining Western stronghold in the *Global South*. Despite the Kremlin's strong support for the East, it always left diplomatic channels open with Tripoli too, attracting both governments –by supporting the LNA while also expressing willingness to support al-Sarraj's government– and projecting an image of a mediator, acting as a powerbroker amid absent Western leadership.

Yet, the Russian policy of pseudo-neutrality began to take hold on Haftar's side, triggered by the 2019 campaign, in which Moscow became fully involved with Tobruk, sending in the Wagner mercenaries. Despite this, Russia still retains something of a mediator's image, although relations with Tripoli have obviously cooled.

The illegal invasion of Ukraine –that the GNU condemned<sup>75</sup>–, has had a major impact on Russia's role in Libya. The Slavic Giant no longer has as much room for manoeuvre, given the massive economic and military effort it is focusing against Kyiv. This is shown in the Wagner staff relocations which, despite being provisional moves, if the conflict persists, the war in Ukraine may further limit Moscow's ability to support Haftar as in recent years, as well as compete with the West in other territories further afield. It could create opportunities that Western governments and their proxies could exploit.<sup>76</sup>

### 3.2 Libya as an example of the patient construction of Chinese hegemony

Beijing is pursuing the same strategy it is pursuing across the African continent in Libya, showing itself to be shy, or perhaps just acting in disguise, in taking a firm position on the Libyan conflict. Since the formation of GNA, President Xi Jinping has maintained a cautious and balanced approach, focusing on long-term interests, and therefore adjusting its approach from one of strict non-interference to a nonalignment strategy, placing bets on both sides of the conflict to handicap the outcome and thereby secure its interests.<sup>77</sup>

The unstoppable growth of the influence of China on the international chessboard is such, that both Tripoli and Tobruk governments are unable to refuse its support or rebuke Beijing for its two-sided game –a tendency that was already clear during the Revolution of 2011, when both NTC and Gaddafi's government maintained diplomatic relations with PRC<sup>78</sup>–. Consequently,

---

<sup>74</sup> Burke, J; & Salih, Z. M. *Libyan Warlord Could Plunge Sudan into a Drawn-out "Nightmare" Conflict*, The Guardian, 23 April 2023, accessed 26 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/23/libyan-warlord-could-plunge-sudan-into-a-drawn-out-nightmare-conflict>.

<sup>75</sup> Libya Update News. *GNU Appeal to Russia to Refrain from Launching Military Operation against Ukraine*, 22 February 2022, 28 March 2023. <https://libyaupdate.com/gnu-appeal-to-russia-to-refrain-from-launching-military-operation-against-ukraine/>.

<sup>76</sup> "Faulkner, C. et al. "Undermining Democracy and..." *Op. cit.* pp. 16.

<sup>77</sup> Chaziza, M. *China's Libya Policy and the BRI: Sights Set on the Future*, Middle East Institute, 22 December 2020, accessed 30 March 2023. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-libya-policy-and-bri-sights-set-future>.

<sup>78</sup> Alkoutami, S; & Wehrey, F. *China's Balancing Act in Libya*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 10 May 2020, accessed 30 March 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/10/china-s-balancing-act-in-libya-pub-81757>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Zhongnanhai –China’s central government– can afford to denounce, as it has consistently done, foreign interference in Libya. In fact, it has repeatedly called for a political solution to the conflict, supporting a ceasefire agreements and diplomatic summits between both authorities<sup>79</sup>.

In recent years, many Chinese companies have invested heavily in energy and oil industries, and Beijing has made diplomatic efforts to engage with various factions and supporting and taking part of the UN peacekeeping actions<sup>80</sup>. China has also been involved in international efforts to rebuild the infrastructure, including providing medical aid and facilitating the return of Chinese workers to Libya.

Relations between Beijing and Tripoli have always been good and stable, especially during Fayez al-Sarraj tenure. In July 2018, on the eighth ministerial meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), GNA Foreign Minister Mohamed Siala and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi signed a memorandum of understanding by which Libya will join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)<sup>81</sup>. The BRI is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013, designed to invest and build up cooperation and partnership between China and the countries under the initiative in accordance with the principle of reciprocal benefit<sup>82</sup>. Jinping aims to increase PRC’s global presence and its prestige on a more comprehensive and soft power approach.<sup>83 84</sup>

Tripoli thus allowed Chinese companies to enter Libya in 2018 –such as Huawei and ZTE– and it has brokered negotiations between the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and the NOC on the purchase of crude oil and possible collaboration on oilfield exploration. This arrangement reflected a year-on-year increase of 160.1%, mainly due to the rebound in Libyan oil exports to China<sup>85</sup>.

Howbeit, since most of the country’s oil fields are in Cyrenaica, China has kept its options open if Cyrenaica’s dominance prevails. Xi Jinping is willing to engage with an autonomous East, strictly in economic terms, with which he has kept financial channels open and made agreements to fund the development projects of the Eastern government’s former Prime Minister, Abdullah al-Thani, in 2016<sup>86</sup>.

---

<sup>79</sup> “Chaziza, M. *China’s Libya Policy ...*” *Op. cit.*

<sup>80</sup> The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China. *Full Text: The Communist Party of China and Human Rights Protection -- A 100-Year Quest*, 24 June 2021, accessed 30 March 2023. [http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgxw/202106/t20210626\\_8919343.htm](http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgxw/202106/t20210626_8919343.htm).

<sup>81</sup> Alharathy, S. *Libya Joins China’s Belt and Road Initiative*, *The Libya Observer*, 13 July 2018, accessed 31 March 2023. <https://libyaobserver.ly/economy/libya-joins-china%E2%80%99s-belt-and-road-initiative>.

<sup>82</sup> The World Bank. *Belt and Road Initiative*, 28 March 2018, accessed 31 March 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>.

<sup>83</sup> Mobley, T. “The Belt and Road Initiative: Insights from China’s Backyard”, *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Air University Press, 2019, pp. 54–57, accessed 31 March 2023. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu>.

<sup>84</sup> Ghafar, A.A.; & Jacobs, A.L. *CHINA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: IMPLICATIONS OF EXPANDING SINO-NORTH AFRICA RELATIONS*, *Global China*, July 2020, accessed 31 March 2023. <https://www.brookings.edu>.

<sup>85</sup> “Alkoutami, S; & Wehrey, F. *China’s Balancing Act ...*” *Op. cit.*

<sup>86</sup> Ramani, S. *Where Does China Stand on the Libya Conflict?*, 18 June 2019, accessed 1 April 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/where-does-china-stand-on-the-libya-conflict/>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

While other international actors are developing a short- and medium-term strategy on the Libyan chessboard, China is looking towards the end game<sup>87</sup>. Zhongnanhai has demonstrated its unwillingness to put all its eggs in one basket and its limits to interference, notably by refusing to accede to al-Sarraj's request for Chinese support to lift the international arms embargo on Libya and has not assisted the Libyan government's efforts to unfreeze financial assets<sup>88</sup>. Nonetheless, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the GNU received more than two million doses of Chinese Sinopharm vaccine<sup>89</sup>.

Chinese economic and diplomatic ties in Libya continue to get stronger and more entrenched. Recently, in March 2023, the establishment of the first Chinese corporation in Misrata Free Zone (MFZ) was announced<sup>90</sup>. Considered to be the gateway to Africa from the Mediterranean Sea and Europe, MFZ was built as a space for commercial exchange between countries by its exemption from any tax restrictions to encourage investment establishments in order to host industrial, commercial and service operations that are advertised to all those who wish to invest<sup>91</sup>. Wangkang Holding Group is the private Chinese overseas industrial investment company that will operate in MFZ, specialised in the manufacture and trade of ceramics and other building materials, through its subsidiary company in Libya, Al Sharq. The business is one of BRI's key players in the African and Middle Eastern regions –it has established subsidiaries in Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq–.<sup>92</sup>

In summary, whilst most external actors are trying to establish their influence by force or by keeping the conflict alive, entrenching chronic instability, China is succeeding, even more effectively than many others, by penetrating all economic, trade and financial fields on both sides of the country. Beijing is avoiding a direct entanglement in the war, and instead preparing to reap benefits no matter the outcome. This in fact matches with Chinese long-held dogma of non-interference –as a contradiction of western R2P policy–, and, in general terms, with its firm policy of technical and financial support in infrastructure and construction in Africa.

The Asian Dragon wants to take advantage of the global trends in order to raise its status as a global superpower, where Libya is an essential piece to do so. In addition, its American rival seems to be weakening, as it is focusing exclusively on the Ukrainian matter, as does Russia, whilst Beijing benefits from a slightly weakened BRICS ally. Therefore, the Libyan case is just another affirming factor to the belief that China is to become the world's new great power.

### 3.3 Biting off more than it could chew: American Global Order crumbles down

---

<sup>87</sup> Magdy, E. *Where does the "Chinese dragon" stand among the Libyan factions?* (Arabic), The Independent Arabia, June 2020, accessed 1 April 2023. <https://www.independentarabia.com/node/126031>.

<sup>88</sup> "Ramani, S. *Where Does China ...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>89</sup> Arab News. *Libya Gets 2 Million Sinopharm Doses with More Expected*, 2 August 2021, accessed 1 April 2023. <https://arab.news/wrp65>.

<sup>90</sup> Zaptia, S. *China's Wangkang Establishes Its First Libyan Company in Misrata Free Zone*, LibyaHerald, 10 March 2023, accessed 2 April 2023. <https://libyaherald.com/2023/03/chinas-wangkang-establishes-its-first-libyan-company-in-misrata-free-zone/>.

<sup>91</sup> Mfzly.com. *Misurata Free Zone*, 3 April 2021, accessed 2 April 2023. <https://mfzly.com/en/about-mfz/>.

<sup>92</sup> Wangkanggroup.com. *ABOUT US*, accessed 2 April 2023. <http://www.wangkanggroup.com/en-us/about.html>.



## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

The NATO intervention in March 2011 was an illegal war of aggression, since the Resolution 1973, approved by the UNSC, only allowed the establishment of a *no-fly zone*, to protect the civilian population, certainly not *Regime Change*. This means that NATO did not respect the limits of the mandate at all and with *Regime Change* it broke the law. Moreover, the 1973 resolution explicitly prohibited the use of ground troops, but British and US special units were already active in Libya before the resolution was passed, which was completely illegitimate.<sup>93</sup>

The post-intervention situation began to spiral out of control, with Islamist terrorist groups –such as IS, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Salafist militias– beginning to penetrate the territory, as the conflict began to take a shape of a New Civil War. The American embassy in Benghazi was attacked on 11 September, 2012, by an AQIM-aligned Jihadist group Ansar al-Sharia, killing the Ambassador Christopher Stevens<sup>94</sup>. In the aftermath of the assault, the diplomatic mission was evacuated and, thereafter, Former President Barack Obama decided to implement a policy that himself described as “leading from behind”; that is, hand over the post-conflict transition management issue to the UN and the UE, while the White House focuses on monitoring the process. Thereby, US relinquished the ability to shape the post-intervention scenario, without considering the consequences of leaving a Failed State on the hands of its rivals<sup>95</sup>.

Washington kept supporting the UNSMIL's efforts and mediation among Libyans, leading to the signing of a political arrangement in the Moroccan city of Skhirat in December 2015. The GNA was formed, with Fayez al-Sarraj as its Premier, under this agreement's conditions<sup>96</sup>. Notwithstanding the construction of a UN-brokered authority, the treaty did not establish goals or projections for the stability of the territory or the project of a unified state with certain characteristics, but rather presented a series of bases or principles, mainly related to two main goals: ensuring that the flow of crude oil is not diverted from routes that benefit US and European companies, so that it cannot be transferred to Washington's rivals; and that Libya does not become a hub for attracting, arming and funding the White House's terrorist lists<sup>97</sup>. Briefly, the agreement consolidated the ultimate goal of NATO's illegal intervention in 2011: the materialisation of a pro-Western government in order to control the ever-rebellious Libya, valuable strategically and economically wise.

In the fall of 2016, the US launched the *Operation Odyssey Lightning* – via the United State African Command (AFRICOM)–, supporting with roughly 500 airstrikes the offensive launched by the GNA to retake control over Sirte<sup>98</sup>,

---

<sup>93</sup> “Ganser, D. *Le guerre illegali ...*” *Op. cit.* pp. 386.

<sup>94</sup> United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Publications | Intelligence Committee*, 15 January 2014, accessed 4 April 2023. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/publications>.

<sup>95</sup> Wehrey, F. *This War is Out of our Hands*, New America & ASU, September 2020, pp. 13–16, accessed 4 April 2023. <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/this-war-is-out-of-our-hands/>.

<sup>96</sup> Tang Abomo, P. *R2P and the US Intervention in Libya*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 169–213, accessed 5 April 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.

<sup>97</sup> UNSMIL. *The Libyan Political AGREEMENT*, 17 December 2015, accessed 5 April 2023. <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files>.

<sup>98</sup> Ash, N. *After 4,000 Dead and Wounded Bunyan Marsous Finally Beats IS in Sirte*, LibyaHerald, 5 December 2016, accessed 6 April 2023. <https://libyaherald.com/2016/12/after-4000-dead-and-wounded-bunyan-marsous-finally-beats-is-in-sirte/>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

which had been under IS rule since May 2015. Henceforth, the city has been under the jurisdiction of Tripolitania but controlled *de facto* by Libyan Shield Force (LSF), a Salafist militia.

When President Donald Trump came to power in 2017, the “no ownership” policy of Obama tenure, shifted to an “active neutrality”, but without any solid or logical direction, showing a lack of interest in the crisis<sup>99</sup>. At first, while officially backing GNA, Washington had a pronounced preference towards the UAE, backing Abu Dhabi in their support of Haftar<sup>100</sup>. The explanation could lie in the US-brokered negotiations that were held to reach the agreement for the normalization of reports between Israel and the UAE in 2020<sup>101</sup>.

Haftar, as a reliable figure with links with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and a strong anti-jihadist rhetoric –added to the fact that he has the American citizenship–, was an attractive partner in Trump’s eyes<sup>102</sup>. In fact, when LNA launched the campaign on GNA in April 2019, the US Former National Security Advisor, John Bolton, told Haftar via phone call that if he wanted to take Tripoli, he should do it “quickly” and with as few civilian casualties as possible<sup>103</sup>. Besides, Erik Prince, the founder of Blackwater –one of the biggest private military corporations, now known as Academi–, was accused by a UN report of trying to use his personal influence with Trump to help secure the release of military equipment bound to support the LNA on the attack on Tripoli, violating the UN arms embargo<sup>104</sup>.

However, the support for the East changed when Washington became aware of the large Russian presence, especially of the Wagner Group, in Cyrenaica. The White House realised that the total withdrawal from Libya provided the Kremlin an opportunity to assert its influence in the whole land. Consequently, the US began sending positive signals to Turkey<sup>105</sup>, as well as confronting Haftar. Washington even threatened the LNA’s Commander with sanctions<sup>106</sup>.

---

<sup>99</sup> Al-Arabiya English. *US Says it Will Maintain Policy of 'Active Neutrality' on Libya*, July 3, 2020, accessed 6 April 2023. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa>.

<sup>100</sup> “Wehrey. F. *This War is ...*” *Op. cit.* pp. 9.

<sup>101</sup> US Department of State. *ABRAHAM ACCORDS PEACE AGREEMENT: TREATY OF PEACE, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND FULL NORMALIZATION BETWEEN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL*, 15 September 2020, accessed 6 April 2023. [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UAE\\_Israel-treaty-signed-FINAL-15-Sept-2020-508.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UAE_Israel-treaty-signed-FINAL-15-Sept-2020-508.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> Al-Atrush. et al. *Exclusive: Trump Backed Libyan Strongman’s Attack on Tripoli, U.S. Officials Say*, Bloomberg, 24 April 2019, accessed 6 April 2023. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-24/trump-libya-haftar-tripoli>.

<sup>103</sup> Kirkpatrick, D.D. *The White House Blessed a War in Libya, but Russia Won It*, The New York Times, 14 April 2020, accessed 6 April 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/world/middleeast>.

<sup>104</sup> Warrick, J. *Blueprint for a Raid: Documents Shed Light on Plan to Buy U.S. Helicopter Gunships for Assault on Tripoli*, Washington Post, 23 February 2021, accessed 6 April 2023. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/libya-coup-western-mercenaries-hifter/2021/02/19/cbdb2c90-55c7-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/libya-coup-western-mercenaries-hifter/2021/02/19/cbdb2c90-55c7-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d_story.html).

<sup>105</sup> “Wehrey. F. *This War is ...*” *Op. cit.* pp. 36–37.

<sup>106</sup> Middle East Eye. *Libya Conflict: US Threatens Haftar with Sanctions over Oil Blockade*, 27 July 2021, accessed 6 April 2023. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/libya-war-us-threaten-khalifa-haftar-sanction-russia-oil-blockade>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

The outcome of this arbitrary policy was inherited by Joe Biden, who continued attacking the presence of Moscow in Cyrenaica<sup>107</sup>, especially after the Russian illegal invasion of Ukraine. In February 2023, CIA director, Williams Burns, visited both GNU and Haftar, and urged the LNA chief to expel Wagner mercenaries from Libya, as its presence compromises the export of oil to Europe<sup>108</sup>.

Recently, the US has presented a 10-year plan for Libya, which is another trial of condemning Russian budding influence in the country and in the Sahel region. This, partially, explains why Washington renewed its interest in Libya, since the North African territory has become an important country for the US in its lobbying against Moscow.<sup>109 110</sup>

As Former President Trump himself admitted in 2017, regarding the American role in Libya: "I think the US has right now enough roles. We're in a role everywhere. So, I do not see that"<sup>111</sup>. In other words, Libya will most likely never be high on the US foreign policy agenda again, as it is not considered a direct threat to its interests for the time being. Moreover, the failures in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria discourage the White House from taking a leading role in another armed conflict in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), nor does it have sufficient budget or power to reconcile all its allies after its full involvement in the Ukraine crisis<sup>112</sup>.

The 2011 illegal intervention aimed for a West-friendly Liberal democracy in Libya, and eventually just became an ephemeral demonstration of strength from the US. As a matter of fact, Obama admitted that the intervention was the worst mistake of his presidency<sup>113</sup>. Nonetheless, Hillary Clinton, Former Secretary of State, who convinced Obama to carry out the intervention, stated that she does not see the Libyan mission "as a failure", but as a "work in progress".<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Al Jazeera. *US Passes Bill Enabling Sanctions on Foreign Actors in Libya*, 29 September 2021, accessed 7 April 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/29/us-passes-bill-enabling-sanctions-on-foreign-actors-in-libya>.

<sup>108</sup> Arredondas, M. *Haftar and Bashagha Discuss the Presence of the Wagner Group in Libya during a Meeting*, Atalayar, 6 February 2023, accessed 7 April 2023. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/haftar-and-bashagha-discuss-presence-wagner-group-libya-during-meeting>.

<sup>109</sup> United States Department of State. *The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability 10-Year Strategic Plan for Libya*, 24 March 2023, 7 April 2023. <https://www.state.gov/the-u-s-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability-10-year-strategic-plan-for-libya/>.

<sup>110</sup> Fetouri, M. *America's New Libya Strategy: Is It about Libya or about Kicking Russia out of Libya?*, Middle East Monitor, 6 April 2023, 7 April 2023. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230406-uss-new-libya-strategy-is-it-about-libya-or-about-kicking-russia-out-of-libya/>.

<sup>111</sup> Phillip, A. *Trump Says He Does Not See Expanded Role for U.S. in Libya beyond ISIS Fight*, Washington Post, 20 April 2017, accessed 7 April 2023. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-does-not-see-expanded-role-for-us-in-libya-beyond-isis-fight/2017/04/20/2e2b735c-25ff-11e7-a1b3-faff0034e2de\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-does-not-see-expanded-role-for-us-in-libya-beyond-isis-fight/2017/04/20/2e2b735c-25ff-11e7-a1b3-faff0034e2de_story.html).

<sup>112</sup> "Molnár, A. et al "The Internationalisation of..." *Op. cit.* pp. 102–103.

<sup>113</sup> Tierney, D. *The Legacy of Obama's 'Worst Mistake'*, The Atlantic, 15 April 2016, accessed 7 April 2023. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/>

<sup>114</sup> Ghattas, K. *Hillary Clinton Has No Regrets About Libya*, Foreign Policy, 14 April 2016, accessed 7 April 2023. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/14/hillary-clinton-has-no-regrets-about-libya/>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

The US lacked of perspective, or perhaps knowledge, because the premises on which the pro-Western Government was founded seemed a fantasy; the reality was that Libya had already become a nest of Jihadists in North Africa and that the oil fields, as well as the diplomatic interests of the GNA –and the GNU now–, were being dominated by American rivals, China and Russia. Once Washington realised this, it relied the responsibility of stabilisation of the North African country on European allies; howbeit, they are not strong or united enough to guide developments in third countries, especially as their attention is focused on the future of the EU and Russian menace on its Eastern borders<sup>115</sup>. For leading a country into the total chaos and do not face the consequences, Uncle Sam has undoubtedly been one of the biggest culprits of the Failure State and the New Civil War in Libya.

In conclusion, the US bit off more than it could chew. Its own R2P policy has eaten US foreign policy up as it has been unable to manage all its domain. Washington has gradually lost its influence in key points on the international chessboard, such as Libya, to its enemies. At this time, it is too late to reverse the situation, which is presented as a *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. Therefore, the US can just desire that the instability of Libya remains, since the end of the conflict would entail the official loss of this territory to its enemies.

---

<sup>115</sup> Fishman, B. "The Trump Administration and Libya: The Necessity for Engagement", *Policy Notes*, no. 40, The Washington Institute for Near East Policies, 24 May 2017, pp. 2, accessed 7 April 2023. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

#### **4. THE BATTLEFIELD FOR REGIONAL AMBITIONS... AND BEYOND**

---

Regional Powers began to become heavily involved in Libya after Western countries turned their back on the disaster generated by NATO's intervention in 2011. It was one of many Failed States from which US allies had to withdraw their troops, in order to focus on the looming threat from Russia and China in other key points. The campaigns in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and, in this case, Libya, were considered a waste of time and resources, chiefly now that all the efforts are focused on Ukraine.

Therefore, many Regional Powers around Libya and from all three continents present in the Mediterranean –Africa, Asia, and Europe–, took the advantage of the orphanhood of the country, where some of them possess a great involvement in the land. There are as many actors interfering on the crisis as crucial interests at stake for the future not only of Libya, but of the Mediterranean, the MENA region, the Muslim world, Europe and the international stage.

For instance, the takeover of the rich oil production, the fight over the East Mediterranean Sea and the commercial ports, the leadership of the EU foreign policy, the expansion of the Political Islam and the battle against terrorism, are the main reasons of struggle between the Regional Powers; that is, Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, and Greece.

The involvement of these actors will be analysed in this chapter, as well as the conflict of interest that emerged between them for the control over Libya.

##### **4.1 The battle for the Mediterranean hegemony: Turkey and Egypt**

---

Libya is the host of the rough battle that Turkey and Egypt are maintaining in the regional panorama. The blast of the Arab Spring in 2011 brought the expansion of the Islamist ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood, backed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, all over the MENA region. The Political Islam came to power in many countries; however, the mainstream ideology was confronted, leading to civil wars, foreign interventions, or military coup d'état, depending on the case.

In Egypt, after the fall of Hosni Mubarak's regime in 2011, the Supreme Commander of the Army and current President of the country, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, overthrew and jailed the Former President Mohamed Morsi, from the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), in July 2013. The aftermath was marked by a harsh repression of the protests from al-Sisi's rule in August –the death toll raised to more than 600 people and almost 4.000 injured<sup>116</sup>–, as well as the ban of the FJP and the declaration of the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group, which made Ankara furious.

Beyond the political origins of the tensions, there is also a strong strategic and economic component. The Eastern Mediterranean is a battleground for control of the seas and its oil sources, in which Libya is indispensable, and in which the role of Greece and the conflict in the island of Cyprus are decisive. Both Ankara and Cairo aim to become the Great Power of the Mediterranean.

---

<sup>116</sup> Mohsen, M. *Health Ministry Raises Death Toll of Wednesday's Clashes to 638*, Daily News Egypt, 16 August 2013, accessed 9 April 2023. <https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/08/16>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

#### 4.1.1. Turkish protectorate of Tripolitania against isolation in the *Mare Nostrum*

Turkey is the Tripolitanian Government's biggest ally, and thanks to Ankara's support and intervention since November 2019, they managed to balance the equilibrium of power vis-à-vis Marshal Haftar's LNA.

During his nearly two decades in power, President Erdoğan, leader of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), has carried out a foreign policy of “neo-Ottomanism”; a long-term strategic vision that pursues a strong Turkish political, economic and military influence in territories that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, claiming the leadership of the Islamic countries of the MENA region by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>117</sup>. This strategy is clearly shown by Ankara's use of diplomatic and military activism in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and North Africa, as well as parts of the Balkans, and a very hostile attitude in Rojava and Başûr –Syrian and Iraqi Kurdistan, respectively–, and in Syria, Israel, Greece, and the Republic of Cyprus<sup>118</sup>. This attitude generated an escalation of tension between Ankara and the Arab League – except for some members with which it does have good relations, such as Qatar and Palestine–, as Ankara is seen as an external actor interfering in the Arab World.

Hence, as a land where Ottoman rule lasted for more than 300 years – especially in the capital Tripoli–, Libya has been hosting these dynamics since the NATO intervention, opposed by Turkey. Initially, the post-intervention in Libya gave Ankara a victory as the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated GNC was the ruling authority. However, as Jihadist activity soared, once Tripoli and Tobruk split, LNA's chairman Khalifa Haftar ordered Qatari and Turkish nationals to leave Cyrenaica in 2014, accused of backing radical Islamist groups.<sup>119</sup>

Turkish support to the GNA was clear chiefly after the Palermo Peace Conference in November 2018 when the Turkish delegation decided to abruptly leave the conference when Haftar showed up. The following month, two Turkish shipments carrying various types of rifles and munitions were seized, which Haftar argued were meant to support GNA forces and militias, violating the UN arms embargo.<sup>120</sup>

On 20 December 2019, Prime Minister al-Sarraj called on several GNA international allies to intervene militarily. Among these, only the Government of Turkey reacted, after receiving parliamentary approval in January<sup>121</sup>. Ankara offered training and operational support to the local Salafi-jihadist militias, air

---

<sup>117</sup> Taşpınar, Ö. “Turkey's Middle East Policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism”. *Carnegie Papers*, no. 10, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008, pp. 14–17, accessed 9 April 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2008/10/07>.

<sup>118</sup> Ahval. *Erdoğan Vying for Islamic World Leadership through Neo-Ottomanism – Analyst*, 30 July 2022, accessed 9 April 2023. <https://ahvalnews.com/recep-tayyip-erdogan/erdogan-vying-islamic-world-leadership-through-neo-ottomanism-analyst>.

<sup>119</sup> Ayata, B. “Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing Arab World: Rise and Fall of a Regional Actor?”, *Journal of European Intervention*, vol. 37, no. 1, January 2015, pp. 95–112, accessed 9 April 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.

<sup>120</sup> The Arab Weekly. *Haftar accuses Turkey of violating arms embargo on Libya*, 21 December 2018, accessed 9 April 2023. <https://the arabweekly.com/haftar-accuses-turkey-violating-arms-embargo-libya>.

<sup>121</sup> International Crisis Group. “The View from Ankara: Why Turkey Intervened in Libya”, *Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters*, no. 257, 3 April 2020, pp. 3–5, accessed 9 April 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31331.5>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

support through unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and drones<sup>122</sup>, tanks, rocket launchers<sup>123</sup>, defence systems and support from Turkish Navy vessels, as well as cooperation with the National Intelligence Organization (MİT). Besides, thousands of militia fighters from the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) were sent to fight against the LNA.<sup>124</sup> The Libyan chessboard turned 180 degrees with the Turkish presence in Tripoli, levelling the playing field between the two sides for the first time, as Haftar had far more diplomatic support and far greater economic and military resources.

Turkey justified the intervention on the grounds that the UN-recognised GNA invited Ankara to participate, making the act legitimate, unlike many other foreign powers that Turkish officials accuse of hypocrisy, such as Egypt, the UAE, Russia and France. They officially recognise al-Sarraj's government but provide military aid and thus indirect legitimacy to Haftar's side<sup>125</sup>. Ankara considered Libya to be the only possible Eastern Mediterranean state with which it could maintain friendly ties and one of the few reliable allies in the entire MENA region, along with Qatar.

One of the most important turning points of the Libyan conflict was the Maritime Delimitation Deal signed on November 27, 2019, by the GNA and Turkish Government to establish a common Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the Mediterranean Sea, allowing them to claim rights over the resources of the sea<sup>126</sup>. The government of Tobruk, Greece, Egypt and the UE claimed that the agreement was illegal, as it violated the Egyptian and chiefly Greek EEZ. In fact, Athens decided to expel the GNA ambassador in December 2019, who at the time was Mohamed Menfi, the current President of the GNU<sup>127</sup>.

---

<sup>122</sup> Middle East Monitor. *Le Monde: Turkish Drone Shifting Balance of Military Power in Libya*, 23 April 2020, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200423-le-monde-turkish-drone-shifting-balance-of-military-power-in-libya/>.

<sup>123</sup> Iddon, P. *Why Did Turkey Transfer U.S.-Made M60 Battle Tanks to Libya?*, Ahval, 14 April 2021, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210414064403/https://ahvalnews.com/libya-turkey/why-did-turkey-transfer-us-made-m60-battle-tanks-libya>.

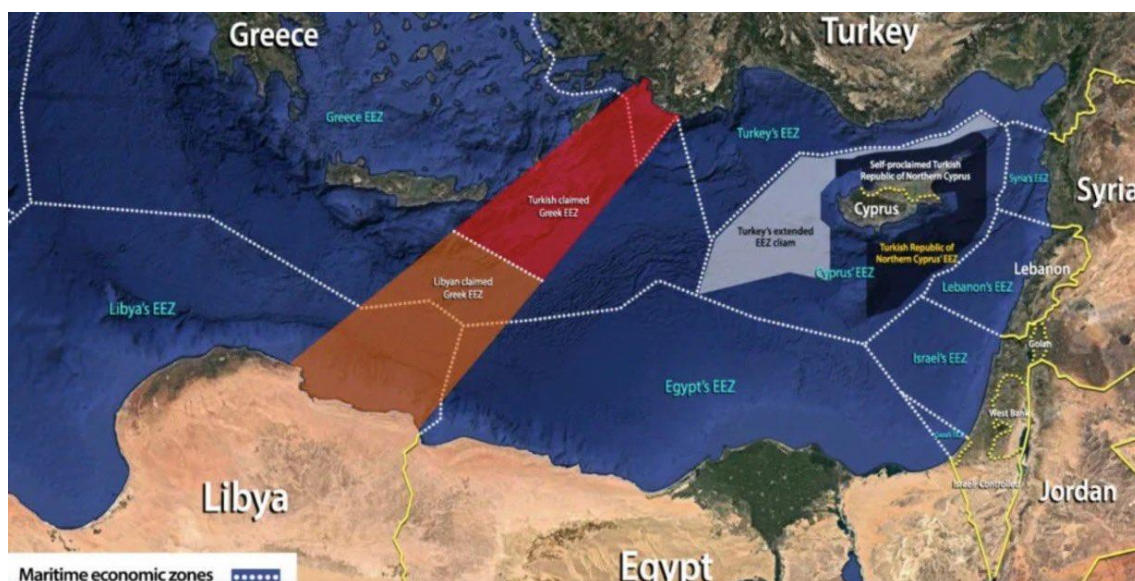
<sup>124</sup> Wehrey, F. *Among the Syrian Militiamen of Turkey's Libya Intervention*, The New York Review, 23 January 2020, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2020/01/23>.

<sup>125</sup> "The View from Ankara..." *Op. cit.* pp. 5.

<sup>126</sup> Keep Talking Greece. *Turkey's Parliament Ratifies Agreement with Libya (Text)*, 5 December 2019, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2019/12/05/turkey-libya-agreement-mou-text-english/>.

<sup>127</sup> Wintour, P. *Greece Expels Libyan Ambassador in Row over Maritime Boundaries*, The Guardian, 6 December 2019, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/06>.

Illustration: Libyan-Turkish maritime delimitation agreement (2019)



Source: Hellenic Daily News NY. *Libyan court ends maritime memorandum with Turkey that aimed to steal Greece's sovereign rights*, 29 January 2021, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://acortar.link/GLN4h1>.

There are two key factors that help explain the motivation and timing of the agreement. Firstly, Turkey's long-standing objection to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), that limits the scope of Ankara's EEZ in favour of Athens and Nicosia. Ankara is heavily dependent on energy imports, so its objections have intensified following natural gas finds in the Eastern Mediterranean in recent years. Moreover, Erdoğan believes that the Maritime Boundary Treaty could be added to the 2011 Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement with the breakaway Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognised only by Turkey<sup>128</sup>.

Secondly, Ankara sees itself getting more and more isolated in the East Mediterranean with the growing cooperation between Israel, Egypt, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. This alliance is portrayed clearly in the formation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EGMF), established in 2019 as an international organisation, Cairo-based. It aims to build a regional gas market in the Eastern Mediterranean and enhance trade relations among the member states<sup>129</sup>.

Furthermore, the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Pipeline project (EastMed) was ratified in January 2020 by the Governments of Greece, Republic of Cyprus, and Israel, shortly after the Turkish-Libyan deal. The construction of the pipeline is foreseen to end by 2025, and it will directly connect the energy resources of the Eastern Mediterranean with Europe via Cyprus and Crete. Erdoğan stated that it strongly opposes the pipeline project, and that "Greek Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, and Israel cannot establish a gas transmission line

<sup>128</sup> Ioannidis, N. *The Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement Between Turkey and "TRNC"*, EJIL: Talk!, 26 May 2014, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-continental-shelf-delimitation-agreement-between-turkey-and-trnc/>.

<sup>129</sup> Ahram Online. *East Mediterranean Gas Forum's Statute Comes into Effect as Ministers Meet in Cairo*, 9 March 2021, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/405649>.



## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

without first getting permission from Turkey”, because of the correspondence of these deposits that the maritime treaty with GNA grants it.<sup>130 131</sup>

As a sign of this economic interest in the North African country, at the time of the military intervention, the Turkish Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) announced that it expected to increase exports to Libya by more than 500 per cent to around \$10 billion, up from \$1.49 billion in 2018.<sup>132</sup>

Turkey is also trying to recover trade and contractual losses suffered by Turkish companies as a result of the 2011 Revolution. In April 2019, Ankara and the Tripoli set up a working group to agree on compensation for these past contracts and establish financial guarantees for future Turkish investments, which envisages \$500 million in compensation for lost machinery and equipment, another \$1.2 billion for debts and another \$1 billion as a letter of guarantee for future purchases. However, it is unclear who is paying for Turkish military support to Libya. Most likely, it is paid directly by Tripoli, but sources close to the Erdoğan administration claim that Turkey and Qatar bear part of the costs.<sup>133</sup>

The EU, from the other side, launched in March 2020 the *Operation Irini*, with the goal of ensuring the implementation of the UN arms embargo in Libya. However, Turkey views the job of the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) unfair, because the EU will not be monitoring land or air delivery routes, which are used by Haftar's backers, whereas Ankara delivers weapons mainly by sea<sup>134</sup>, i.e., EUNAVFOR MED only stops Turkish shipments<sup>135</sup>. Resultantly, illegal arms deliveries continued seized<sup>136</sup>.

Ankara's ironclad commitment to Tripolitania is primarily a desperate attack on the harsh isolation of regional powers in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ideological support is a pure strategy to militarily supply local militias for the Dbeibeh's Government survival. From the other hand, despite the tensions are still high, once the Second Civil War finished in the fall of 2020, Erdoğan started normalising relations with Egypt, as he wants to keep his options open, and get away from the political ostracism Turkey. Now they are close to resuming full diplomatic relations.

In any case, Turkey holds presidential elections on 14 May, and their outcome could change Ankara's policy in Libya. Many polls show a defeat for Erdoğan, who has been in power since 2003, against the coalition formed of six opposition parties –National Alliance– led by the laic candidate, Kemal

---

<sup>130</sup> Stamouli, N. *EastMed: A Pipeline Project That Ran Afoul of Geopolitics and Green Policies*, POLITICO, 18 January 2022, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eastmed-a-pipeline-project-that-ran-afoul-of-geopolitics-and-green-policies/>.

<sup>131</sup> Lindenstrauss, G. et al. *The Perils of the Turkey-Libya Maritime Delimitation Deal*, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 2019, pp. 3, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.inss.org.il/publication>.

<sup>132</sup> “International Crisis Group. The View from Ankara...” *Op. cit.* pp.12.

<sup>133</sup> “Lindenstrauss, G. et al. *The Perils of...*” *Op. cit.* pp. 6-7.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibidem.* pp. 13.

<sup>135</sup> Operationirini.eu. *Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI: Mission*, accessed 10 April 2023. <https://www.operationirini.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/6.RHIB-speeding-Copy.jpg>.

<sup>136</sup> Libya Update News. *Operation IRINI Investigates 311 Merchant Ships and 15 Flights in March*, 5 April 2023, accessed 11 April 2023. <https://libyaupdate.com/operation-irini-investigates-311-merchant-ships-and-15-flights-in-march/>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Kılıçdaroğlu. If the change of government materialises in Ankara, this will have a decisive impact on the Libyan conflict, as the GNU would most likely be defenceless against Haftar, who stated on a speech in December 2022 that "this is the last chance for the government (GNU) to hold elections"<sup>137</sup>.

#### 4.1.2. Haftar, Cairo's protégé to counter Turkish menace

As its neighbour, no other MENA region country plays as a powerful role in Libya as Egypt, with all its changes of position regarding the Libyan conflict due to its drastic regime changes.

After the coup d'état against Morsi by current President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in 2013, the foreign policy of Egypt radically changed towards a full support to the Eastern Government. The relationship between Tobruk and Cairo is based in two main goals: eradicating Political Islam and Jihadism and empowering the Supreme Commander of the LNA, Khalifa Haftar. For al-Sisi, having Cyrenaica under the role of an Egyptian-friendly authority creates an IS and Muslim Brotherhood free zone, as well as a buffer land to counter the Qatari and Turkish influence from Tripolitania. Because of this, the reports of both Governments are defined by an important arms delivery, and strong diplomatic ties, evidenced on the regular trips that Haftar makes to Cairo.<sup>138</sup>

Almost from the beginning, Egypt has been supporting the large-scale anti-Islamist offensive, labelled as *Operation Dignity*, launched by Khalifa Haftar. Egypt became definitively involved from October 2014, when it bombed Islamist factions in Benghazi from the air.<sup>139</sup> On 15 February 2015, IS-aligned Shura Council of Mujahideen (SCM) beheaded 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Derna and recorded it on camera. Within hours, the Egyptian Air Force responded with airstrikes in Derna in retaliation for the killings, coordinated with Tobruk<sup>140</sup>. The GNA condemned the airstrikes which killed 50 militants and 7 civilians<sup>141</sup>.

*Operation Dignity* did not end with the seizure of control of all of Cyrenaica and Fezzan under the LNA, as Tripoli was being dominated by Islamist militias, funded by Qatar, and the GNA was of a Political Islam-friendly. Therefore, al-Sisi backed Haftar's attack on the UN-backed Government.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Information Office - General Command of the Libyan Armed Forces. *Speech of the Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar during the celebration of the 71st anniversary of Libya's independence in Benghazi* (Arabic), 22 December 2022, accessed 11 April 2023. <https://acortar.link/sd64b8>.

<sup>138</sup> Fitzgerald, M; & Toaldo, M. *A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players*, International Affairs Group, 19 May 2016, accessed 11 April 2023. [https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping\\_libya\\_conflict/](https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_libya_conflict/).

<sup>139</sup> Michael, M; & Almosmari, O. *Egypt Warplanes Hit Libya Militias, Officials Say*, Boston Globe, 16 October 2014, accessed 11 April 2023. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2014/10/15/egypt-warplanes-hit-libya-militias-officials-say/l2kb0Eb7zL5ClcsTTiAw6l/story.html>.

<sup>140</sup> Reuters. *East Libyan Forces Say Took Part in Egyptian Strikes in Derna*, 26 May 2017, accessed 11 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-egypt-idUSKBN18M2MP>.

<sup>141</sup> Al Jazeera. *Civilians Killed as Egypt Launches Air Strikes in Libya*, 17 February 2015, accessed 11 April 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/2/17/civilians-killed-as-egypt-launches-air-strikes-in-libya>.

<sup>142</sup> Wintour, P. *Libya Crisis: Egypt's Sisi Backs Haftar Assault on Tripoli*. The Guardian, 14 April 2019, accessed 12 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/14/libya-crisis-egypt-sisi-backs-haftar-assault-on-tripoli>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

However, everything changed when al-Sisi decided to take an ambitious step forward in the race for Mediterranean hegemony against his rival Turkey, with two treaties; firstly, the joint military manoeuvres between Egypt, Greece and the Republic of Cyprus in the Eastern Mediterranean, which aimed to enhance their defence cooperation against Ankara; secondly, and most importantly, the announcement of the formation of the EGMF, incorporating the membership of Ankara's great rivals Israel and Greece<sup>143</sup>.

Greece also started to become more involved in the geopolitics of the Libyan conflict. Much of the the EastMed project investment, that will transport natural gas from the Levantine basin's offshore gas reserves to Athens, comes from Greek money. The pipeline is being developed by IGI Poseidon S.A., a 50/50 joint venture between Greek gas company DEPA and Italy's Edison.<sup>144</sup>  
145 146

This explains the anger that erupted in the government of Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, when the GNA Premier al-Sarraj and President Erdoğan agreed to establish a common EEZ in the Levantine Coast, where the gas fields planned to be marketed to Europe via the East Med are located.<sup>147</sup> Thereafter, Athens cut relations with the GNA and the tensions with Turkey soared. Such is the Greek rejection of the Tripoli authorities, that in November 2022, Greek Foreign Minister, Nikos Dendias, landed in the capital and refused to receive GNU Foreign Minister, Najla Mangoush. Dendias then ordered the plane to take off before even going out of the airplane.<sup>148</sup>

For Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, on the other hand, the deal was a reflection of the broader regional struggle between proponents and opponents of Political Islam. The Arab League viewed Turkey's act as yet another unacceptable intervention in the internal affairs of a league member –Libya– and a disservice to the Arab nation.<sup>149</sup>

All this led to July 2020, in the fall of the Second Civil War, when tensions between Erdoğan and al-Sisi reached a peak in Sirte. Cairo warned that any Ankara-backed attempt to take the city could lead its army to intervene directly. It could have resulted in a larger-scale conflict between Egypt and Turkey, a NATO member.<sup>150</sup> Had it not been for the Wagner line established from Sirte to al-Jufra, and the Kremlin's mediation, the Turkish advance eastwards would not have been halted<sup>151</sup>.

---

<sup>143</sup> "Ahram Online. *East Mediterranean Gas...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>144</sup> IGI Poseidon. *Annex 7A - Public Consultation Plan and letters of approval from the Cypriot Authorities*, 27 May 2022, accessed 12 April 2023. <https://igi-poseidon.com/downloads>.

<sup>145</sup> DEPA COMMERCIAL S.A. *EASTMED-POSEIDON SHAREHOLDERS INVEST TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT TO FID WITHIN TWO YEARS (19/12/2019)*, 23 December 2019, accessed 12 April 2023. <https://depa.gr/eastmed-poseidon-shareholders-invest-to-develop-the-project-to-fid-within-two-years-19-12-2019/?lang=en>.

<sup>146</sup> "Lindenstrauss, G. et al. *The Perils of...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 4.

<sup>147</sup> "Keep Talking Greece. *Turkey's Parliament Ratifies ...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>148</sup> Stamouli, N. *Hello, Goodbye: Greek Minister Lands in Tripoli, Then Immediately Takes off Again*, POLITICO, 17 November 2022, accessed 12 April 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/greek-foreign-minister-nikos-dendias-land-in-libya-and-immediately-leaves-najla-mangoush/>.

<sup>149</sup> "Lindenstrauss, G. et al. *The Perils of...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 2-3.

<sup>150</sup> France 24. *Will Egypt Send Troops into Libya?*, 23 June 2020, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://www.france24.com/en/20200623-will-egypt-send-troops-into-libya>.

<sup>151</sup> "Descifrando la guerra. *Analizando - Libia hacia...*" *Op. cit.*

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

The GNA-Turkish advance intimidated Egypt, which sees the weakening of its buffer state –Cyrenaica– as a growing danger on its borders. Cairo thus reaffirmed its commitment to supply Haftar with military supplies. However, post ceasefire al-Sisi has begun to normalise relations with Ankara, as with the GNU<sup>152</sup>. Despite this, Egypt will not relinquish its position as the leader of the EastMed gas route to Europe, revitalising its efforts to position itself as a regional energy hub, and with the option of opening up to other markets.

Cairo does not only want to ensure its own political and economic stability and growth, but also to enforce internal security and eliminate the Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt's intention is to continue and sustain the Libyan conflict until its policy outcome is achieved. Now that these may be Erdoğan's last moments in charge of Turkey, the opportunity to control the entire country of Libya may be approaching.

### 4.2 Struggle for Political Islam: United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia

The three countries analysed in this chapter, which are important members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), maintained an initial consensus during the 2011 Revolution, based on their joint repudiation of Gaddafi and not a by-product of broader political cooperation. As such, it is not surprising that the consensus soon ended due to Qatar's support and funding of Islamist movements all around the globe, increased tensions with Wahhabis countries in the Arabian Peninsula –chiefly the UAE and Saudi Arabia–, and Egypt, concerned about the impact of the Muslim Brotherhood. Further cooperation between the states became impossible in 2014, when Khalifa Haftar launched his anti-Islamist *Operation Dignity* in Benghazi.

Rivalry between Doha and the rest of Gulf countries began since the Emir Khalifa Al Thani's reign started after a coup d'état in 1995, as small Gulf country became one of the richest states in the world, driven by its large sources of oil and its financial expansion worldwide<sup>153</sup>. In June 2017, tensions reached a peak when Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt severed diplomatic relations with Qatar, established a trade embargo on Doha, accused of funding terrorist groups, supporting them via Al Jazeera and having strong links with Tehran and Ankara<sup>154</sup>. Despite the relations have calmed down after January 2021, there is still a clear feud.

The three countries are using Libya as an arena to reinforce their *statu quo* in the Gulf, with little genuine interest in the peace process. The fact that Libya is also a country with large reserves of crude oil and natural gas makes it a market rival if it falls into rival hands. Gulf countries are thus likely to prefer a government over which they have influence or persistent agitation. Riyadh's

---

<sup>152</sup> EgyptToday. *President Sisi Meets with Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh, Reaffirms Egypt Support for Libyans*, 18 February 2021, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/98765/President-Sisi-meets-with-Abdel-Hamid-Dbeibeh-reaffirms-Egypt-support>.

<sup>153</sup> Hall, J. *Emir of Qatar Profile: Who Is Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, How Did He Turn Qatar into the World's Richest Nation and Why Has He Decided to Abdicate?*, The Independent, 25 June 2013, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east>.

<sup>154</sup> Wintour, P. *Qatar given 10 Days to Meet 13 Sweeping Demands by Saudi Arabia*, The Guardian, 23 June 2017, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/23/close-al-jazeera-saudi-arabia-issues-qatar-with-13-demands-to-end-blockade>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

involvement, led by the ambitious Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is also deeply determined by Turkish activities in Libya, as there is growing competition between the two for regional dominance in the MENA region, as well as rivalry with Qatar's ally Iran.

### 4.2.1. Emirates: Between commercial dominance in the Sea and militarism

Abu Dhabi maintains a more considerable presence on the Libyan scene than its ally Saudi Arabia –which mainly contributes financially and diplomatically, although Riyadh also shipped some weaponry too<sup>155</sup>. Initially, the UAE offered only humanitarian assistance; however, after seeing that Qatar was participating militarily more actively, the Abu Dhabi began supplying military equipment to the LNA<sup>156</sup>.

Its motivation there goes beyond the undermining of the expanding influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qatar and Turkey or the establishment of a friendly Government in the country. Former Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed's policy over the past decades has been highly ambitious and technical in the economic sphere, forging ties with all kinds of state and non-state actors around the world in order to expand his business and patronage empire. As the US hegemony that use to protect its European allies is weakening, the UAE is willing to extend its domain to the *Mare Nostrum*.

In the last decade, Dubai Ports World (DP World) –a multinational logistics company that deals with port operations, maritime services, and free trade zones– has become the symbol of Abu Dhabi's economic strength around the world. This trend is clear in the company's ambition to promote major sporting events and brands; for instance, golf, tennis, Formula 1, Dakar Rally and cricket international tournaments. Thus, the goal of the current Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed is to increment its relevance in the political and commercial dynamics of the Mediterranean, where Libya is an essential strategic target for increasing Emirati presence in the region. Precisely, the company has started operations in many Mediterranean harbours, such as the ports of Algiers and Djen-Djen (Algeria), Limissa (Republic of Cyprus), Yarimca in the Bosphorus (Turkey), Fos and Marseille –in the future– (France) and Tarragona (Spain).<sup>157</sup> Consequently, Abu Dhabi also desires to hurt Turkey in Libya, as Ankara's treaty on the EEZ with Tripolitania threatens its commercial dominance plans in the Mediterranean Sea<sup>158</sup>.

Unlike China, which also have a very pragmatic attitude, the UAE stands out for its large arms and military supply to Haftar's campaign –and to the militias of the city of Zintan, which are independent from GNU<sup>159</sup>–. Since the creation of the GNA in 2016 has been doing so, violating the UN embargo. Additionally, Abu Dhabi established a secret base in al-Khadim in the same

---

<sup>155</sup> Salyk-Virk, M. *Airstrikes, Proxy Warfare, and Civilian Casualties in Libya*, New America, June 2020, pp. 34, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net/documents>.

<sup>156</sup> Molnár, A. et al "The Internationalisation of..." *Op cit.* pp. 119-121.

<sup>157</sup> Dpworld. *Our Locations*, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://www.dpworld.com/about-us/our-locations>.

<sup>158</sup> Antonopoulos, P. *Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, France & UAE Denounce Turkey In Joint Statement*, Greek City Times, 12 May 2020, accessed 13 April 2023. <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/05/12/greece-egypt-cyprus-france-uae-denounce-turkey-in-joint-statement/>.

<sup>159</sup> "Fitzgerald, M; & Toaldo, M. *A Quick Guide...*" *Op. cit.*

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

year, near the old airport in Marj province<sup>160</sup>, as well as another base close to the Libyan border in Niger to deploy military support to LNA during its attack on GNA in 2019<sup>161</sup>. Besides, the Emiratis also reinforced the defence system at the al-Jufra airbase, located 600 km south of Tripoli. One of the most controversial outcomes of the Emirati arms aid was the July 2019 airstrike on the Tajoura migrant detention centre in Tripoli, in which at least 60 migrants were killed. GNA accused the UAE directly of firing missiles from a fighter jet.<sup>162</sup>

Nonetheless, the UAE has paid the salaries of the Wagner Group's mercenaries in Libya and made its drones and logistical means available to them.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, Erik Prince, founder of the famous Blackwater, founded a new military company in Abu Dhabi, Reflex Responses Company (R2), which has worked in every Arab Spring in which the Emirati Government has been involved. This corporation has been working in Cyrenaica, alongside different militias linked to the Tobruk-based Government<sup>164</sup>.

Mohamed bin Zayed and Mohamed bin Salman maintain a united support, although different contributions to Haftar's camp –the former has an economic frame and the latter mainly military–. On the other hand, Abu Dhabi has ambitions that go beyond fighting the Political Islam, Turkey and Qatar, as the Emirati leaders aim to expand their economic empire along the Mediterranean Sea and to control the shares of the wealthy oil crescent in the Gulf of Sidra<sup>165</sup>. However, after the Eastern failure in 2020, whilst its support on Haftar stayed steady, Abu Dhabi began to approach to Dbeibeh's Government. The rivalry with Doha in Libya is still alive though<sup>166</sup>.

### 4.2.2. Qatari money and weaponry for Tripoli's militia oligopoly

Qatar was the first Arab country to recognise the NTC, and it offered the air base at al-Udeid and the military camp as-Sajlija to NATO intervention against Gaddafi, as well as sending arms and providing equipment and training to GNC<sup>167</sup>. Henceforth, the Emir Tamim bin Hamad has been supporting the two different Governments in Tripolitania, being the most trusted supporter for Tripolitania throughout the conflict. In fact, Doha helped al-Sarraj Government

---

<sup>160</sup> UN Security Council. *Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya Established pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council*, 9 December 2019, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3838591>.

<sup>161</sup> Zenn, J. *2019-09-01 UAE to Establish Military Base in Niger*, APAN Community, 6 May 2020, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fms0/m/oe-watch-articles-singular-format/326246>.

<sup>162</sup> Balkiz, G. *Libya Claims UAE Bombed Migrant Center with US-Made Jet*, CNN, 5 July 2019, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/05/africa/libya-uae-migrant-center-intl/index.html>.

<sup>163</sup> "Wehrey, F. *This War is...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 28–29.

<sup>164</sup> "Martin, J. *LIBYA: THE FIRST...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 8.

<sup>165</sup> International Crisis Group. "After the Showdown in Libya's Oil Crescent", *Middle East and North Africa Report*, no. 189, 9 August 2018, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa>.

<sup>166</sup> Eljarh, M. *UAE and Qatar Manage Shifting Policies, Fluid Alliances in Libya*, Al-Monitor, 28 January 2023, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/01/uae-and-qatar-manage-shifting-policies-fluid-alliances-libya>.

<sup>167</sup> "Molnár, A, et al. *The Internationalisation of...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 119.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

with an active contribution to the signing on the reconciliation between Tuareg and Tabu tribes in Fezzan.<sup>168</sup>

Doha aims to keep improving its disrepute on the public scene and reposition itself on the international stage appearing as a link between the West and the Gulf states. However, most Arab League member states –the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia– did not welcome Qatar's decision, mainly because of its support for Islamist groups in Libya and the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>169</sup>. Its alliance with Turkey is also frowned upon in the Arab League, as there is a military base on Qatari territory since 2014<sup>170</sup>.

The Qatari government has been accused on multiple occasions of being the world's leading exporter and investor in jihadist terrorist groups. In Libya, Doha has financed, supplied arms to and maintained close ties with several Islamist groups in the case of the New Civil War concept in Libya; for instance, IS and Ansar al-Sharia<sup>171</sup>, and the AQIM-aligned militias that control Tripolitania –such as the former Libya Dawn, or the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), among others–<sup>172 173 174</sup>. These Salafi-jihadist militias hold *de facto* power and violence in the region, each imposing its own laws in the territories they dominate. They are also closely connected to the black market and the mafias that provide means to the migrants to reach Europe<sup>175</sup>. As an evidence, Doha withdrew its ambassador from Cairo in 2015 in protest at Egypt's unilateral military action against the IS in Derna, claiming it could harm innocent civilians and favour one side in the Libyan conflict<sup>176</sup>.

Growing tensions came to a head in 2017, when the Gulf countries imposed a diplomatic embargo and sanctions on Qatar. Therefore, when Haftar launched the offensive on the GNA, Doha demanded a stronger arms embargo against the LNA, further increasing tensions with Saudi Arabia. The Qatari media Al Jazeera has been also employed to tarnish the UAE's image in Libya by taking advantage of its reach and reputation in the Muslim world.

---

<sup>168</sup> Middle East Monitor. *Increasing Egyptian Military Support for Haftar Forces in the Battle of Tripoli*, 25 April 2019, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190425-increasing-egyptian-military-support-for-haftar-forces-in-the-battle-of-tripoli/>.

<sup>169</sup> Arredondas, M. *Qatar Tries to Boost Muslim Brotherhood in Libya via Turkey*, Atalayar, 19 August 2022, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/qatar-tries-boost-muslim-brotherhood-libya-turkey>.

<sup>170</sup> Anadolu Agency Energy. *President Erdogan Visits Turkey Military Base in Qatar*, 16 November 2017, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/energy-security/president-erdogan-visits-turkey-military-base-in-qatar/14567>.

<sup>171</sup> Sizer, L. *Libya's Terrorism Challenge. Assessing the Salafi-Jihadi Threat*, Middle East Institute (Counterterrorism Series), October 2017, pp. 11, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files>.

<sup>172</sup> Khliifa, A. "THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL PARTIES IN INFLUENCING THE CONFLICT IN LIBYA", *International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR)*, vol. 8, no. 12, December 2020, pp. 1053, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.

<sup>173</sup> "Sizer, L. *Libya's Terrorism Challenge ...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 11.

<sup>174</sup> "International Crisis Group. "The View from Ankara..." *Op. cit.* pp. 13.

<sup>175</sup> Lacher, W; & Al-Idriss, A. *CAPITAL OF MILITIAS: Tripoli's Armed Groups Capture the Libyan State*, Small Arms-Survey & Security Assessment in North Africa, June 2018, pp. 11, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files>.

<sup>176</sup> Tolba, A. *Egypt, Qatar Trade Barbs in Dispute over Libya Strikes*, Reuters, 19 February 2015, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-egypt-qatar-idUSKBN0LN07520150219>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Despite Qatar continuing to adopt a pro-Islamist agenda, like the UAE, Doha is normalising reports with Tobruk, as the President of HoR, Aguilah Saleh Issa, made his first official visit to the Gulf country in December 2022. Tamim bin Hamad seems to start considering opening negotiations to all parties in the North African country, as well as improving relations with other Gulf state enemies.<sup>177</sup>

#### 4.3 The European silent fight: Italy and France

---

Relations between France and Italy have deteriorated significantly following the arrival of Emmanuel Macron at the Elysée in May 2017 and the formation of a coalition government in Italy made up by the Five Star Movement (M5S) and the League (LN) in June 2018. Both governments attacked each other with actions –such as the meeting that the Minister of Economic Development, Luigi Di Maio, had with the leaders of the French *Yellow Vests movement* in January 2019– and accusations, most notably those of Matteo Salvini, the Former Minister of the Interior, who blamed Paris for destabilising North Africa with its stance on Libya<sup>178</sup> and for deliberately leaving migrants on Italian soil<sup>179</sup>.

After the Italian political crisis of September 2019, rapports between both countries have improved remarkably with the following Italian Governments – the second cabinet of Giuseppe Conte and the tenure of Mario Draghi–. As Giorgia Melonia arrived in power, Roma and Paris have come back to disagreement, especially regarding immigration policies<sup>180</sup>.

Since Brexit and Angela Merkel's retirement from the German chancellorship, Macron has seen an opportunity to make France the leader and representative of European foreign policy on the global stage, and concretely in the backyard of Europe, the Mediterranean Sea. This is now opposed by Rome, governed by Meloni's nationalist approach that aims to project Italy's position in the EU, threatening the hierarchy that France does not want to change. The competition between the two European countries is clearly seen in the race to see who can get an alternative source of natural gas to Russia, where Libya is a candidate. This rivalry blocks the possibility of common coordination regarding the management of actions in Libya from Brussels.

##### 4.3.1. Rome's ambition to emerge as a European power

---

Italy, the former colonial power, has important interests in Libya, especially through its hydrocarbon company, Eni. From the other hand, Rome blames France for playing the role of mediator in what it considers to be its

---

<sup>177</sup> Belmonte, N. *The Abrupt Change in Libyan-Qatari Relations*, Atalayar, 12 September 2022, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/abrupt-change-libyan-qatari-relations>.

<sup>178</sup> Dodman, B. *As Clashes Rage in Libya's Tripoli, Italy Takes Swipe at France*, France 24, 4 September 2018, accessed 14 April 2023. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180904-libya-elections-italy-france-salvini-macron-sarkozy-diplomacy>.

<sup>179</sup> Bibbo, B. *Border Tensions Boil over as France "Dumps" Migrants in Italy*, Al Jazeera, 22 October 2018, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/22/border-tensions-boil-over-as-france-dumps-migrants-in-italy>.

<sup>180</sup> Roberts, H. *Meloni and Macron Clash over Migrants*, POLITICO, 11 November 2022, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/giorgia-meloni-emmanuel-macron-italy-france-clash-migrant-ship-ocean-viking/>.



## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

historical territory, precisely the budding importance of the French oil company Total, with strong ties with the Tobruk-based Government.

One of the main fears of the Prime Minister at the time, Silvio Berlusconi, during the illegal intervention in 2011 was an exodus of migrants due to the violence and Gaddafi's threats to reconsider cooperation agreements on illegal immigration if Europeans supported opponents of his regime. Moreover, given reports of a Muslim Brotherhood presence among Cyrenaica's rebels, the Italian government feared that the possible fall of the Gaddafi regime would encourage the creation of a state linked to AQIM. The Libyan crisis brought to light the contradictions stemming from a policy aimed at pursuing national interests.<sup>181</sup>

Mario Monti replaced Berlusconi as Prime Minister, who quickly signed an agreement with the GNC to curb irregular migration. After the Lampedusa tragedy in October 2013, Rome wanted to strengthen European instruments. It advocated from the outset the launch of FRONTEX's *Triton Operation*, and then the launch of EUNAVFOR MED which extended its mandate to train and equip the Libyan Coast Guard.<sup>182</sup>

Once the UN-backed GNA was formed, Italy launched the *Operation Hippocrates* in September 2016, deploying a task force of 300 soldiers, divided into three components: medical, command and control, and protection of the components of the supra-medical structure. The mission aims to assist the forces fighting ISIS in Misrata<sup>183 184</sup>. In August 2017 Italy decided to end two ships of its own Navy. Further, in September a military mission with 100 Italian civil guards was decided to be deployed to the Southern borders of Libya<sup>185</sup>.

However, Italy realised that military cooperation and humanitarian aid did not project its influence in the region, which was falling into third hands. Moreover, with the arrival of Macron, France stepped forward as a leading mediator in the conflict. Hence, a peace conference was held in Palermo conference in November 2018. The rivalry between Italy and France thus worsened.

After Haftar's assault on Tripoli, Italy began to seek a diplomatic solution. To this end, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte held telephone conversations with the Tunisian and Russian presidents. Improved Italian-Russian relations during 2019 may have contributed to Russia's increased influence in the region<sup>186</sup>. Although Rome intended to take a leading role in resolving the Libyan crisis, this would be impossible without French cooperation. In December 2019, Italy wanted to accord a maritime border delimitation agreement with the GNA, as it could increase Rome's political take

---

<sup>181</sup> Bosco, A. & McDonnell, D. "From Berlusconi to Monti", *Italian politics*, Berghahn Journals, vol. 27, no.1, 2012, pp. 194, accessed 16 April 2023.

<sup>182</sup> Molnár, A; & Komlósi, O. *Az Európai Unió mediterrán térséggel összefüggő kapcsolata. Párbeszéd és konfliktusok. Dialogue and conflicts*, Dialóg Campus, 2019, pp. 95–123, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://core.ac.uk>.

<sup>183</sup> Esercito italiano. *Libia - Operazione Ippocrate - Schieramento Di Un Ospedale Da Campo in Libia - Esercito Italiano*, accessed 16 April 2023. [https://www.esercito.difesa.it/operazioni/operazioni\\_oltremare/pagine/libia-operazione-ippocrate.aspx](https://www.esercito.difesa.it/operazioni/operazioni_oltremare/pagine/libia-operazione-ippocrate.aspx).

<sup>184</sup> Ministero della Difesa. *Operazione Ippocrate (Da Gennaio 2018 Inserita Nella Missione Bilaterale Di Assistenza e Supporto in Libia) - Difesa.It*, accessed 16 April 2023. [https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op\\_intern\\_corso/op\\_ippocrate/Pagine/default.aspx](https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/op_ippocrate/Pagine/default.aspx).

<sup>185</sup> Molnár, A. et al "The Internationalisation of..." *Op cit*.

<sup>186</sup> Assad, A. *Conte: Italia, Russia and Tunis reject a military solution in Libya*, The Libya Observer, 1 May 2019, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://libyaobserver.ly/news>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

in the Mediterranean. However, it never happened<sup>187</sup>. Conte also announced that Italian companies started their work to complete the Tripoli airport project, which would contribute to the return of international airlines to Libya<sup>188</sup>.

Italy at that moment found itself continually being ignored and locked into its background role. The maritime agreement between the GNA and Turkey, a supposed ally in Libya, harms Italian Eni and Edison gas companies' involvement in the EastMed<sup>189</sup>.

The Italian role changed drastically with the arrival of Georgia Meloni in power. In fact, a few months ago Italian Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni, and the GNU Prime Minister, Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, signed an \$8 billion gas production deal, aimed at boosting energy supplies to Europe through Italian energy company Eni and NOC<sup>190</sup>.

An Italian military intervention would have provoked an escalation with France, as both sides supported two different and opposing camps. This could also have been reflected within EU dynamics and migration fluxes towards Italy. The passive and inactive position of Rome during and after the NATO illegal intervention has limited its capacity of actions, since France has had a quicker reaction. That is why, notwithstanding Conte's aggressive attitude towards Macron on this issue, Italy's diplomatic initiatives over the years have failed to give it a permanent role in the pacification process. Rome has not been brave enough to challenge Paris' self-proclaimed position as the leader of European foreign policy in Libya, and it has instead accepted its subordinate position, preferring not to fuel the Libyan conflict, nor the lack of unity between states within the EU. This attitude is changing now with Georgia Meloni, who has a determined goal to claim the responsibility in Libya against French interests.

### 4.3.2. Arrogance and hypocrisy: the French loss of Africa

France's Libyan interests are mainly opposite to Italian ones. Paris has been reacting more quickly and more firmly to the outcomes of the Arab Spring, and thus claiming the European leading role in the stabilisation process inherited from the US. Despite the dual approach explained above, Brussels backs principally French policy, i.e., the support for the Tobruk-based Government, although the UN is loyal to the GNU.

Under President Nicolas Sarkozy tenure, France was the first state to recognise the NTC rebels and, alongside the UK, it led the illegal intervention in March 2011. As in the leaked email of Hillary Clinton, Sarkozy's motivations were based in an increment on Libyan petroleum shares for the French Total and a major presence in North Africa<sup>191</sup>. Howbeit, the crude oil imports from Libya decreased by a third by 2017, never reaching its pre-crisis level<sup>192</sup>, and

---

<sup>187</sup> Alwasat News. *The Italian ambassador hands over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the National Accord a draft memorandum for the demarcation of maritime borders* (Arabic), 4 February 2021, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://alwasat.ly/news/libya/309985>.

<sup>188</sup> Alwasat News. *Buccino: Italian companies will start work at Tripoli airport and expected to open in 2022* (Arabic), 31 March 2021, accessed 16 April 2023. <https://alwasat.ly/news/libya/315868>.

<sup>189</sup> "DEPA COMMERCIAL S.A. EASTMED-POSEIDON SHAREHOLDERS..." *Op. cit.*

<sup>190</sup> "Al Jazeera. *Italy's Eni Signs...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>191</sup> "Wikipedia. *Hillary Clinton Email...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>192</sup> OEC. *Where does France import Crude Petroleum from?*, accessed 17 April 2023. <https://oec.world/en/profile>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

the instability gave the chance to many other states to project their power in the territory.

François Hollande arrived at Elysée in 2012 with this political disappointment. He recognised the UN-brokered GNA and participated in the UN-led mediation process to stabilise Libya. Even so, France started covertly to back Khalifa Haftar since 2015, and France's support for the GNA is hardly genuine.

Paris was exposed when it admitted that personnel from the paramilitary arm of the Directorate General for External Security (DGSE), the French foreign intelligence agency, were sent to Cyrenaica after the death of three French soldiers in a helicopter crash near Benghazi in July 2016. This confirmed that, while organising conferences and showing peaceful and mediating intentions, France was secretly firmly supporting the side condemned by the UN. Henceforth, DGSE officers accompanied LNA forces on frontline missions and acted as forward mortar and artillery observers, conducting clandestine reconnaissance for counter-sniper missions. Paris's commitment to Haftar's side was mainly in the fight against terrorism in Benghazi, although the Elysée perfectly knew that *Operation Dignity* went beyond this, and that France could benefit from the takeover of the oil crescent fields.<sup>193</sup>

Once in power, Emmanuel Macron took a proactive role as a mediator in the conflict. Shortly after winning the presidential elections in May 2017, he hosted peace talks in Paris, where al-Sarraj and Haftar even shook hands<sup>194</sup>. The act was seen as a major step forward for peace, even Macron stated: "The cause of peace has made great progress today".

However, the illusion of "the peaceful French neutrality" did not last for long, and the reality started to appear once again. In September 2017, the UN tried to revive the LPDF by proposing to amend the Skhirat Agreement and to involve Tobruk on it. UNSMIL wanted to build a plan to prepare legislative and presidential elections and provide humanitarian assistance. The compromise failed due to the opposition by France and by other local groups.<sup>195</sup>

Moreover, in May 2018 Paris hosted another summit; the International Conference on Libya. In these negotiations, the parts set the date for presidential and parliamentary elections for the December 10, 2018, without any official agreement though<sup>196</sup>. In Macron's perspective, the stabilisation of the country could not be materialised until elections were held. Nonetheless, the summit was clearly biased in nature, as numerous militias from cities under GNA jurisdiction, such as Misrata, Zintan and Sabratha, boycotted the meeting. This meant that Tripolitania was under-represented at the conference, i.e., the negotiations were doomed to fail<sup>197</sup>. The following Italian-brokered Palermo

---

<sup>193</sup> "Wehrey, F. *This War is...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 21.

<sup>194</sup> Wintour, P; & Stephen, C. *Libyan Rival Leaders Agree to Ceasefire after Macron-Hosted Talks*, The Guardian, 25 July 2017, accessed 17 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/france-raises-hopes-of-deal-between-libyan-rival-factions>.

<sup>195</sup> "Cecinini, S. *La Guerra civile...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 132–137.

<sup>196</sup> Irish, J; & Pannetier, M. *Libyan Factions Agree to December 10 Elections at Paris Talks*, Reuters, 29 May 2018, accessed 17 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-meeting-idUSKCN1IU188>.

<sup>197</sup> Gazzini, C. *Making the Best of France's Libya Summit*, no. 58, International Crisis Group, 28 May 2018, pp. 1–7, accessed 17 April 2023. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/b58-making-best-frances-libya-summit>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

Peace Conference in October 2018 was not seen in a good light from Macron's eyes. France interpreted it as a trial to possess a role of European international policymaker that does not belong to Rome, but exclusively to Paris<sup>198</sup>.

In April 2019, French mediation policies proved to be a pantomime when the LNA attacked Tripoli. The GNA suspended cooperation with France<sup>199</sup>, accusing Paris of backing Haftar's rebel forces, and of playing "both sides"<sup>200</sup>. The Elysée has denied any military support to Haftar in its offensive against Tripoli. However, in July 2019, a shipment of four Javelin anti-tank missiles was found at an LNA base, a model that the US only sells to its closest allies. France denied that they were theirs, but later admitted that the missiles did belong to them, but those missiles, being disused, they were in a warehouse in Tripoli, awaiting destruction, without clarifying how they ended up there.<sup>201 202</sup>

In response to the maritime treaty between the GNA and Turkey, EGMF member France, via the EU, declared a maritime interdiction operation, the so-called *Operation Irini*, which began in April 2020. The mission focused entirely on the maritime front, which in practice turns out to be a biased operation against Ankara, as its shipments went by sea, whereas Haftar receives foreign military aid by air or land from Egypt<sup>203</sup>. This demonstrates Macron's obsessive demonisation of Turkish intervention in Libya and his protection of French economic and strategic interest by all costs<sup>204</sup>.

However, now Georgia Meloni is threatening Macron's leadership of EU policy in Libya, as she agreed with Dbeibeh an \$8 billion gas production deal in January 2023, aimed at boosting energy supplies to Europe<sup>205</sup>. Paris has been outperformed by Rome unexpectedly regarding an in a matter of the utmost priority for Brussels, which raised concerns in the Elysée<sup>206</sup>. In June 2023, Paris will host the French Libyan Energy Forum (FLEF), in cooperation with the NOC and the Libyan French Chamber of Commerce (LFCC)<sup>207</sup>.

---

<sup>198</sup> Fasanotti, F.; & Fishman, B. *How France and Italy's Rivalry Is Hurting Libya*, Foreign Affairs, 31 October 2018, accessed 17 April 2023. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/france/2018-10-31/how-france-and-italys-rivalry-hurting-libya>.

<sup>199</sup> Tidey, A. *Libya's UN-backed government suspends cooperation with France, accuses it of backing rebel forces*, Euronews, 19 April 2019, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://www.euronews.com/2019/04/19>.

<sup>200</sup> Mikil, B. *From Gaddafi to Haftar: France Plays Both Sides in Libya*, Middle East Eye, 11 June 2019, accessed 18 April 2023. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/gaddafi-haftar-france-plays-both-sides-libya>.

<sup>201</sup> Schmitt, E; & Walsh, D. *U.S. Missiles Found in Libyan Rebel Camp Were First Sold to France*, The New York Times, 9 July 2019, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/09/world/middleeast/us-missiles-libya-france.html>.

<sup>202</sup> Daou, M. *Libya: Who supports the General Khalifa Haftar?*, France 24, 19 July 2019, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://graphics.france24.com/libia-general-khalifa-haftar-apoyo/>.

<sup>203</sup> Harchaoui, J; & Mariani, B. *Fragmentation of Peacemaking in Libya: Reality and Perception*, Global Transition Series, Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep), 22 August 2022, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08>.

<sup>204</sup> "Wehrey, F. *This War is...*" *Op. cit.* pp. 36.

<sup>205</sup> "Al Jazeera. *Italy's Eni Signs...*" *Op. cit.*

<sup>206</sup> Libya Update News. *Zero Results with Italy to Resolve Our Differences over Libya, Macron's Envoy Says*, 4 February 2023, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://libyaupdate.com/zero-results-with-italy-to-resolve-our-differences-over-libya-macrons-envoy-says/>.

<sup>207</sup> Zaptia, S. *French Libyan Energy Forum, Paris 20 to 22 June*, LibyanHerald, 14 April 2023, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://libyaherald.com/2023/04>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

France is seeing its power in Africa shrink drastically, as evidenced by the failure of Macron's tour of the former French African colonies in March 2023<sup>208</sup>, and by Burkina Faso's order to expel the French army from its territory<sup>209</sup>. Libya is the perfect representative of these dynamics in the continent; Macron desires to become the saviour of the West in the face of the fall of the US Global Order. However, these dynamics seem difficult for Europe to reverse. Paris had the opportunity to begin to gradually restore its presence on the African continent, although it is failing due to the inconsistency and lack of trustworthiness of its past and current actions.

The EU's "dual approach" in Libya, fought between France and Italy, shows a lack of assertiveness and pragmatism, which is taken advantage by rival powers. French policy is certainly pro-peace, yet this conceptually is seen from Macron's eyes, a stable Libya must indisputably have strong relations with Paris, and the conflict must not cease until this goal is achieved.

It is also important to look at the domestic politics of France, since the general strike is still ongoing, and the popularity of the President of the Republic plunges because of the approval of the pension reform. This may generate less French effort in Libya, as well as a challenge for Macron's continuity in power, in favour of his rival Marie Le Pen.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>208</sup> United World International. *Macron's Failed Tour: Africa Did Not Believe the "New Partnership"*, 7 March 2023, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://unitedworldint.com/28985-macrons-failed-tour-africa-did-not-believe-the-new-partnership/>.

<sup>209</sup> Ndiaga, T. *Burkina Faso Marks Official End of French Military Operations on Its Soil*, Reuters, 20 February 2023, accessed 18 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-faso-marks-official-end-french-military-operations-its-soil-2023-02-19/>.

<sup>210</sup> Cezaux, S. *LA POPULARITÉ DE MACRON CHUTE ENCORE EN AVRIL, CELLE DE LE PEN AU PLUS HAUT, SELON UN SONDAGE*, BFMTV, 13 April 2023, accessed 18 April 2023. [https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/gouvernement/la-popularite-de-macron-chute-encore-en-avril-celle-de-le-pen-au-plus-haut-selon-un-sondage\\_AN-202304130813.html](https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/gouvernement/la-popularite-de-macron-chute-encore-en-avril-celle-de-le-pen-au-plus-haut-selon-un-sondage_AN-202304130813.html).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

---

Considering the information gathered throughout the study, and to provide a solution to the two hypotheses set out in the first chapter, a series of conclusions have been drawn.

In the first place, foreign interference in Libya over the past decade has exacerbated the divisions and antagonisms within the country since the NATO illegal intervention in 2011 and therefore, the Failure State; two Governments, two armies, two currencies, two perspectives and no will to unite. No foreign actor involved in the conflict supports, in practice, a peacebuilding project aimed at unifying the country under a single authority, as each one is limited to feed its proxies in order to damage the influence of its enemies or expand its presence for ambitions on a Global scale –in the cases of Russia, China and the US for World hegemony– or Regional –Turkey and Egypt for Mediterranean dominance, the UAE and Qatar for that of the MENA region and Italy and France for that of the European region–. Libyan sovereignty and future is under the hands of external powers, and the imposition of its positions inevitably locks the country in a never-ending scene of New Civil War, where the international antiterrorist struggle against the vast majority of Salafi-jihadi groups seems more important than a realistic country project.

Furthermore, this reality also demonstrates the UN's total incapacity as a mediator and protector of international security; the UNSMIL already attempted twice to build unsuccessfully a unified and recognised Libyan government –the GNA and the GNU, which in practice functions as an Islamist group-aligned militia oligopolies<sup>211</sup>– and an arms embargo that no actor involved complies with.

Therefore, there are two main possible short-term outcomes for the conflict: firstly, both Governments and the international actors could agree that the conflict in Libya is a consequence of the formation of an artificial nation that has not been able to manage the antagonisms that colonialism created, and they could settle the official division in two different countries. However, the split would not bring automatic peace, as it is likely that the borders will not be delimited, and this could revive the war; secondly, one side could impose itself over the other and unite the country under its exclusive authority. Tripoli-based UN-backed Government does not have any odds in its favour, as the majority of the international support –including economic and military aid– is guided towards the unrecognised Tobruk Government.

Besides, GNU's force relies on the multiple Salafi-jihadi militias of Tripolitania, which do not possess a firm unity –in fact they have been fighting each other for many years– and especially on foreign powers, specifically Doha and Ankara. Hence, the Turkish elections of May will determine the future of the country: if Erdoğan is kicked out from power, Turkey might withdraw, and Tripoli would be defenceless against the LNA. Haftar has already threatened the GNU that if the electoral laws are not enacted by the end of next June, actions will be taken.<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>211</sup> "Lacher, W; & Al-Idriss, A. *CAPITAL OF MILITIAS...*" *Op cit.* pp. 4.

<sup>212</sup> Alkoutami, A. *Libyan elections: UN launches new initiative in Libya, amid controversy over its effectiveness*, BBC New Arabic, 11 March 2023, accessed 22 April 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-64875484>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

However, there is a new third outcome; now that China is pursuing a policy of appeasement between feuding countries in the Middle East –Iran-Saudi Arabia<sup>213</sup>, Syria-Saudi Arabia<sup>214</sup> or Qatar-EAU<sup>215</sup>– whose weight in conflicts in the MENA region, including Libya, is considerable, this strategy of “correcting Western-US mistakes” may reach North Africa –as it did in Yemen<sup>216</sup>–, where Beijing counts on good relations with both governments, as well as with the main external parties involved.

From the other hand, in relation to Libya’s relevance in the international landscape, the research demonstrated that it is undoubtedly a key land that will provide a big advantage to whomever controls it. Its geographical position in the Mediterranean and its connection to the Sahel is very attractive in the eyes of the foreign actors. They do not forget its abundant oil and natural gas deposits neither. The powers that aspire to great positions in the decades to come are making their moves on the Libyan chessboard, as expected. On the contrary, the current weakening powers observe their influence in Libya drastically reduced.

Nonetheless, it is also the expression of the current dynamics of the global geopolitics landscape; to begin with, it shows a decadent US, which has been caught up with its decisions and actions from the past; unlike the US, China beat Washington to the punch by taking over the world economy by pursuing a pragmatic strategy with the BRI, based on diplomatic effectiveness that will bring it great benefits no matter what the outcome; lastly, Russia is determined to attack and weaken Washington's position in countries where there is still a relevant Western presence, with the ambition to regain the international clout and influence it possessed during the Soviet era.

Besides, the Libyan scenario is a representative of the emergence of non-European regional powers that have seen the decline of US hegemony as an opportunity to project their position beyond the Mediterranean or the MENA region and perhaps become a Global Power in the new multipolar order. These ambitious actors include Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Turkey. Finally, the American collapse inevitably has repercussions for its European allies. The EU's false promise of unity, its desperate search for some reliable sources of natural gas and oil, and France's imminent official loss of Africa, makes Europe the most adversely affected actor. The times of Europe's imperial greatness fades away in favour of anti-Western Global Powers and its hungry regional actors.

All these factors have generated a rudderless and hopeless Libya.

---

<sup>213</sup> Hafezi, P. et al. *Iran and Saudi Arabia Agree to Resume Ties in Talks Brokered by China*, Reuters, 10 March 2023, accessed 22 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-saudi-arabia-agree-resume-ties-re-open-embassies-iranian-state-media-2023-03-10/>.

<sup>214</sup> Xin, L. *China Welcomes Rapprochement between Saudi Arabia, Syria*, Global Times, 24 March 2023, accessed 22 April 2023. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202303/1287912.shtml>.

<sup>215</sup> Mills, A. et al. *Qatar and UAE in Process of Restoring Diplomatic Ties*, Reuters, 18 April 2023, accessed 22 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-uae-process-restoring-diplomatic-ties-official-says-2023-04-18/>.

<sup>216</sup> Grim, R. *To Help End the Yemen War, All China Had to Do Was Be Reasonable*, The Intercept, 7 April 2023, accessed 22 April 2023. <https://theintercept.com/2023/04/07/yemen-war-ceasefire-china-saudi-arabia-iran/>.

RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

- Ahram Online. *East Mediterranean Gas Forum's Statute Comes into Effect as Ministers Meet in Cairo*, 9 March 2021. <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/405649>.
- Ahval. *Erdogan Vying for Islamic World Leadership through Neo-Ottomanism – Analyst*, 30 July 2022. <https://ahvalnews.com/recep-tayyip-erdogan/erdogan-vying-islamic-world-leadership-through-neo-ottomanism-analyst>.
- Al-Atrush, A. et al. *Exclusive: Trump Backed Libyan Strongman's Attack on Tripoli, U.S. Officials Say*, Bloomberg, 24 April 2019. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-24/trump-libya-haftar-tripoli>.
- Alharathy, S. *Libya Joins China's Belt and Road Initiative*, The Libya Observer, 13 July 2018. <https://libyaobserver.ly/economy/libya-joins-china%E2%80%99s-belt-and-road-initiative>.
- Alkoutami, S; & Wehrey, F. *China's Balancing Act in Libya*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 10 May 2020. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/10/china-s-balancing-act-in-libya-pub-81757>.
- Alkoutami, A. *Libyan elections: UN launches new initiative in Libya, amid controversy over its effectiveness*, BBC New Arabic, 11 March 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-64875484>.
- Alwasat News. *The Italian ambassador hands over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the National Accord a draft memorandum for the demarcation of maritime borders* (Arabic), 4 February 2021. <https://alwasat.ly/news/libya/309985>.
- Alwasat News. *Buccino: Italian companies will start work at Tripoli airport and expected to open in 2022* (Arabic), 31 March 2021. <https://alwasat.ly/news/libya/315868>.
- Al Jazeera. *Civilians Killed as Egypt Launches Air Strikes in Libya*, 17 February 2015. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/2/17/civilians-killed-as-egypt-launches-air-strikes-in-libya>.
- Al Jazeera. *US Passes Bill Enabling Sanctions on Foreign Actors in Libya*, 29 September 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/29/us-passes-bill-enabling-sanctions-on-foreign-actors-in-libya>.
- Al Jazeera. *Italy's Eni Signs \$8bn Gas Deal with Libya amid Energy Crunch*, 22 January 2023. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/28/italys-meloni-in-libya-to-conclude-8bn-gas-deal>.
- Aman, A. *Egypt Acts as Middleman for Russia-Libya Arms Deal*, Al-Monitor, 19 February 2015. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/02/egypt-efforts-libya-army-russia-weapons.html>.
- Anadolu Agency Energy. *President Erdogan Visits Turkey Military Base in Qatar*, 16 November 2017. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/energy-security/president-erdogan-visits-turkey-military-base-in-qatar/14567>.
- Anderson, L. *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980*, Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Antonopoulos, P. *Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, France & UAE Denounce Turkey In Joint Statement*, Greek City Times, 12 May 2020. <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/05/12/greece-egypt-cyprus-france-uae-denounce-turkey-in-joint-statement/>.
- Anzera, G; & Massa, A. *Media Diplomacy e narrazioni strategiche. Autorappresentazione dello Stato e attuazione della politica estera in rete*, Bonnano, 2017
- Arab News. *Libya Gets 2 Million Sinopharm Doses with More Expected*, 2 August 2021. <https://arab.news/wrp65>.
- Arredondas, M. *Haftar and Bashagha Discuss the Presence of the Wagner Group in Libya during a Meeting*, Atalayar, 6 February 2023.



## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- <https://atalayar.com/en/content/haftar-and-bashagha-discuss-presence-wagner-group-libya-during-meeting>.
- Arredondas, M. *Qatar Tries to Boost Muslim Brotherhood in Libya via Turkey*, Atalayar, 19 August 2022. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/qatar-tries-boost-muslim-brotherhood-libya-turkey>.
- Ash, N. *After 4,000 Dead and Wounded Bunyan Marsous Finally Beats IS in Sirte*, LibyaHerald, 5 December 2016. <https://libyaherald.com/2016/12/after-4000-dead-and-wounded-bunyan-marsous-finally-beats-is-in-sirte/>.
- Assad, A. *Bashagha's Government Sworn in at HoR in Tobruk*, The Libya Observer, 3 March 2022. <https://libyaobserver.ly/news/bashaghas-government-sworn-hor-tobruk>.
- Assad, A. *Conte: Italia, Russia and Tunis reject a military solution in Libya*, The Libya Observer, 1 May 2019. <https://libyaobserver.ly/news>.
- Ayata, B. "Turkish Foreign Policy in a Changing Arab World: Rise and Fall of a Regional Actor?", *Journal of European Intervention*, vol. 37, no. 1, 12 December 2014. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.
- Balkiz, G. *Libya Claims UAE Bombed Migrant Center with US-Made Jet*, CNN, 5 July 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/05/africa/libya-uae-migrant-center-intl/index.html>.
- Beccaro, A. *Foreign Actors in Libya's Crisis*, Atlantic Council & Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), 2017.
- Belmonte, N. *The Abrupt Change in Libyan-Qatari Relations*, Atalayar, 12 September 2022. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/abrupt-change-libyan-qatari-relations>.
- Belmonte, N. *The Wagner Group in Libya: An Added Problem for Gas Exports to Europe*, Atalayar, 29 September 2022. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/wagner-group-libya-added-problem-gas-exports-europe>.
- Bibbo, B. *Border Tensions Boil over as France "Dumps" Migrants in Italy*, Al Jazeera, 22 October 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/10/22/border-tensions-boil-over-as-france-dumps-migrants-in-italy>.
- Black, M.; & Obradovic, L. "Multi-actor deterrence defining the concept", *Æther: A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2022.
- Bosco, A. & McDonnell, D. "From Berlusconi to Monti", *Italian politics*, vol. 27, no. 1, Berghahn Journals, 2012.
- Burke, J; & Salih, Z. M. *Libyan Warlord Could Plunge Sudan into a Drawn-out "Nightmare" Conflict*, The Guardian, 23 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/23/libyan-warlord-could-plunge-sudan-into-a-drawn-out-nightmare-conflict>.
- Call, C. "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No, 8, 2008.
- Cecinini, S. *La Guerra civile in Libia, Dalla caduta di Gheddafi al governo Draghi (2011-2021)*, 2021.
- Cezaux, S. *LA POPULARITÉ DE MACRON CHUTE ENCORE EN AVRIL, CELLE DE LE PEN AU PLUS HAUT, SELON UN SONDAGE*, BFMTV, 13 April 2023. [https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/gouvernement/la-popularite-de-macron-chute-encore-en-avril-celle-de-le-pen-au-plus-haut-selon-un-sondage\\_AN-202304130813.html](https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/gouvernement/la-popularite-de-macron-chute-encore-en-avril-celle-de-le-pen-au-plus-haut-selon-un-sondage_AN-202304130813.html).
- Chamorro, A. *Proxy War: conflictos a la sombra de las potencias*, Descifrando la Guerra, 2020.
- Chaziza, M. *China's Libya Policy and the BRI: Sights Set on the Future*, Middle East Institute, 22 December 2020. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-libya-policy-and-bri-sights-set-future>.
- Chengu, G. *Gaddafi's Libya Was Africa's Most Prosperous Democracy*, Countercurrents.org, 12 January 2013. <https://countercurrents.org/chengu120113.htm>.
- Congressional Research Service. *Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy*, 3 January 2022.
- Cristiani, D. "UK-Libya: the Consistency of Being Selective", *Analysis*, no. 238, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI), 2014.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- Crosston, M. D. "Cold War and Ayatollah Residues: Syria as a Chessboard for Russia, Iran, and the United States", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 94–111, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26270818>.
- Daou, M. *Libya: Who supports the General Khalifa Haftar?*, France 24, 19 July 2019. <https://graphics.france24.com/libia-general-khalifa-haftar-apoyo/>.
- DEPA COMMERCIAL S.A. *EASTMED-POSEIDON SHAREHOLDERS INVEST TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT TO FID WITHIN TWO YEARS (19/12/2019)*, 23 December 2019. <https://depa.gr/eastmed-poseidon-shareholders-invest-to-develop-the-project-to-fid-within-two-years-19-12-2019/?lang=en>.
- Descifrando la Guerra. *Analizando - Libia hacia una nueva guerra civil*, 2 September 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qbmcff4HcUE>.
- Destradi, S. "Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony, and leadership", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2010.
- Dodman, B. *As Clashes Rage in Libya's Tripoli, Italy Takes Swipe at France*, France 24, 4 September 2018. <https://www.france24.com/en/20180904-libya-elections-italy-france-salvini-macron-sarkozy-diplomacy>.
- Dpworld. *Our Locations*. <https://www.dpworld.com/about-us/our-locations>.
- Dyner, A.M. "Russia's Libya Policy", *PISM Bulletin*, vol. 6, no. 1252, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych (PISM), 15 January 2019. <https://pism.pl>.
- EgyptToday. *President Sisi Meets with Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh, Reaffirms Egypt Support for Libyans*, 18 February 2021. <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/98765/President-Sisi-meets-with-Abdel-Hamid-Dbeibeh-reaffirms-Egypt-support>.
- Eljarh, M. *UAE and Qatar Manage Shifting Policies, Fluid Alliances in Libya*, Al-Monitor, 28 January 2023. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/01/uae-and-qatar-manage-shifting-policies-fluid-alliances-libya>.
- Energy, Capital & Power. *Refineries in Libya by Capacity*, 13 August 2021. <https://energycapitalpower.com/refineries-in-libya-by-capacity/>.
- Eriksen, S. S. "State failure" in theory and practice: the idea of the state and the contradictions of state formation", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2011.
- Esercito italiano. *Libia - Operazione Ippocrate - Schieramento Di Un Ospedale Da Campo in Libia - Esercito Italiano*. [https://www.esercito.difesa.it/operazioni/operazioni\\_oltremare/pagine/libia-operazione-ippocrate.aspx](https://www.esercito.difesa.it/operazioni/operazioni_oltremare/pagine/libia-operazione-ippocrate.aspx).
- Fasanotti, F.; & Fishman, B. *How France and Italy's Rivalry Is Hurting Libya*, Foreign Affairs, 31 October 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/france/2018-10-31/how-france-and-italys-rivalry-hurting-libya>.
- Faulkner, C. et al. "Undermining Democracy and Exploiting Clients: The Wagner Group's Nefarious Activities in Africa"; Cruickshank, P. *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel at West Point*, vol. 15, no. 6, 19 July 2022. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu>
- Fetouri, M. *America's New Libya Strategy: Is It about Libya or about Kicking Russia out of Libya?*, Middle East Monitor, 6 April 2023, 7 April 2023. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20230406-uss-new-libya-strategy-is-it-about-libya-or-about-kicking-russia-out-of-libya/>.
- Feuer, S. et al. *Libya: A Violent Theater of Regional Rivals*, Institute for National Security Studies, 2019.
- Fishman, B. "The Trump Administration and Libya: The Necessity for Engagement", *Policy Notes*, no. 40, The Washington Institute for Near East Policies, 24 May 2017. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis>.
- Fitzgerald, M; & Toaldo, M. *A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players*, International Affairs Group, 19 May 2016. [https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping\\_libya\\_conflict/](https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_libya_conflict/).
- France 24. *Will Egypt Send Troops into Libya?*, 23 June 2020. <https://www.france24.com/en/20200623-will-egypt-send-troops-into-libya>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- Fuente Cobo, I. *Libya, an Energy Opportunity for Europe and for Spain*, Atalayar, 6 December 2022. <https://atalayar.com/en/content/libya-energy-opportunity-europe-and-spain>.
- Ganser, D. *Le guerre illegali della NATO*, Le Terre, 2022.
- Gazzini, C. *Making the Best of France's Libya Summit*, no. 58, International Crisis Group, 28 May 2018. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/b58-making-best-frances-libya-summit>.
- Ghafari, A.A.; & Jacobs, A.L. *CHINA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: IMPLICATIONS OF EXPANDING SINO-NORTH AFRICA RELATIONS*, Global China, July 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu>.
- Ghattas, K. *Hillary Clinton Has No Regrets About Libya*, Foreign Policy, 14 April 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/14/hillary-clinton-has-no-regrets-about-libya/>.
- Grim, R. *To Help End the Yemen War, All China Had to Do Was Be Reasonable*, The Intercept, 7 April 2023. <https://theintercept.com/2023/04/07/yemen-war-ceasefire-china-saudi-arabia-iran/>.
- Grove, T. *Russia Says Embassy Staff in Libya Evacuated after Attack*, Reuters, 3 October 2013. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-libya-embassy-idUSBRE9920GU20131003>.
- Gopal, A; & Hodge, J. *A Network View of Syria's Proxy War*, New America, 6 April 2021.
- Hafezi, P. et al. *Iran and Saudi Arabia Agree to Resume Ties in Talks Brokered by China*, Reuters, 10 March 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-saudi-arabia-agree-resume-ties-re-open-embassies-iranian-state-media-2023-03-10/>.
- Harchaoui, J; & Mariani, B. *Fragmentation of Peacemaking in Libya: Reality and Perception*, Global Transition Series, Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep), 22 August 2022. <https://peacerep.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08>.
- Hellenic Daily News NY. *Libyan court ends maritime memorandum with Turkey that aimed to steal Greece's sovereign rights*, 29 January 2021. <https://acortar.link/GLN4h1>.
- Holsti, K. J. "The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory"; Mansbach, R. *American Political Science Review*, vol. 8, no.1, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985.
- Iddon, P. *Why Did Turkey Transfer U.S.-Made M60 Battle Tanks to Libya?*, Ahval, 14 April 2021. <https://web.archive.org/web/20210414064403/https://ahvalnews.com/libya-turkey/why-did-turkey-transfer-us-made-m60-battle-tanks-libya>.
- IGI Poseidon. *Annex 7A - Public Consultation Plan and letters of approval from the Cypriot Authorities*, 27 May 2022. <https://igi-poseidon.com/downloads>.
- International Crisis Group. "After the Showdown in Libya's Oil Crescent", *Middle East and North Africa Report*, no. 189, 9 August 2018. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa>.
- International Crisis Group. "The View from Ankara: Why Turkey Intervened in Libya", *Turkey Wades into Libya's Troubled Waters*, no. 257, 30 April 2020. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia>.
- Irish, J; & Penetier, M. *Libyan Factions Agree to December 10 Elections at Paris Talks*, Reuters, 29 May 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-meeting-idUSKCN1IU188>.
- Ioannidis, N. *The Continental Shelf Delimitation Agreement Between Turkey and "TRNC"*, EJIL: Talk!, 26 May 2014. <https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-continental-shelf-delimitation-agreement-between-turkey-and-trnc/>.
- Kaldor, M. "Organized Violence in a Global Era", *Perspectives*, no. 19, 2002. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23615979>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- Keep Talking Greece. *Turkey's Parliament Ratifies Agreement with Libya (Text)*, 5 December 2019. <https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2019/12/05/turkey-libya-agreement-mou-text-english/>.
- Khlifa, A. "THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL PARTIES IN INFLUENCING THE CONFLICT IN LIBYA", *International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR)*, vol. 8, no. 12, December 2020. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.
- Kirkpatrick, D.D. *The White House Blessed a War in Libya, but Russia Won It*, The New York Times, 14 April 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/14/world/middleeast>.
- Kishi, R.; & Jones, S. *Libya Most likely to see non-state armed group fragmentation and alliances*, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2019.
- Kozera, C.A., et al. *Game of Proxies – Towards a new model of warfare: Experiences from the CAR, Libya, Mali, Syria, and Ukraine*, Security & Defence Quarterly, vol. 31, no. 4, December 2020.
- Lacher, W; & Al-Idriss, A. *CAPITAL OF MILITIAS: Tripoli's Armed Groups Capture the Libyan State*, Small Arms-Survey & Security Assessment in North Africa, June 2018. <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files>.
- Libya Update News. *GNU Appeal to Russia to Refrain from Launching Military Operation against Ukraine*, 22 February 2022. <https://libyaupdate.com/gnu-appeal-to-russia-to-refrain-from-launching-military-operation-against-ukraine/>.
- Libya Update News. *Zero Results with Italy to Resolve Our Differences over Libya, Macron's Envoy Says*, 4 February 2023. <https://libyaupdate.com/zero-results-with-italy-to-resolve-our-differences-over-libya-macrons-envoy-says/>.
- Libya Update News. *Operation IRINI Investigates 311 Merchant Ships and 15 Flights in March*, 5 April 2023. <https://libyaupdate.com/operation-irini-investigates-311-merchant-ships-and-15-flights-in-march/>.
- Lindenstrauß, G. et al. *The Perils of the Turkey-Libya Maritime Delimitation Deal*, Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 2019. <https://www.inss.org.il/publication>.
- Lobell, S. E; & Mauceri, P. *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics: Explaining Diffusion and Escalation*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- López Villafaña, V. "El mundo unipolar y las condiciones y límites de la globalización", *CONfinés de relaciones internacionales y ciencia política*, Vol. 1, Nº 1, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, 2006
- Magdy, E. *Where does the "Chinese dragon" stand among the Libyan factions?* (Arabic), The Independent Arabia, June 2020. <https://www.independentarabia.com/node/126031>
- Magyar, B.; & Madlovics, B. "Trapped in the Language of Liberal Democracy", A *Concise Field Guide to Post-Communist Regimes: Actors, Institutions, and Dynamics*, Central European University Press, 2022.
- Martín, J. *LIBYA: THE FIRST TOTALLY PRIVATIZED WAR IN MODERN HISTORY*, Novact. [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/shockmonitor\\_submission.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/issues/Mercenaries/WG/OtherStakeholders/shockmonitor_submission.pdf)
- Matthews, S. *Cables Reveal Secret Preparations for Haftar's Visit to Russian Aircraft Carrier*, Middle East Eye, 2 March 2023. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/libya-haftar-russia-aircraft-carrier-visit-cables-reveal-preparations>.
- Meyer, H. *Russia Supports Political Role for Qaddafi's Wanted Son in Libya*, Bloomberg, 24 December 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com>.
- Mezran, K, & Miller, E. *Libya: From Intervention to Proxy War*, Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, 2017. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org>.
- Michael, M; & Almosmari, O. *Egypt Warplanes Hit Libya Militias, Officials Say*, Boston Globe, 16 October 2014. <https://apnews.com/article>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- Middle East Monitor. *Increasing Egyptian Military Support for Haftar Forces in the Battle of Tripoli*, 25 April 2019. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190425-increasing-egyptian-military-support-for-haftar-forces-in-the-battle-of-tripoli/>.
- Middle East Monitor. *Le Monde: Turkish Drone Shifting Balance of Military Power in Libya*, 23 April 2020. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200423-le-monde-turkish-drone-shifting-balance-of-military-power-in-libya/>.
- Middle East Eye. *Libya Conflict: US Threatens Haftar with Sanctions over Oil Blockade*, 27 July 2021. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/libya-war-us-threaten-khalifa-haftar-sanction-russia-oil-blockade>.
- Mills, A. et al. *Qatar and UAE in Process of Restoring Diplomatic Ties*, Reuters, 18 April 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-uae-process-restoring-diplomatic-ties-official-says-2023-04-18/>.
- Mikil, B. *From Gaddafi to Haftar: France Plays Both Sides in Libya*, Middle East Eye, 11 June 2019. <http://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/gaddafi-haftar-france-plays-both-sides-libya>.
- Ministero della Difesa. *Operazione Ippocrate (Da Gennaio 2018 Inserita Nella Missione Bilaterale Di Assistenza e Supporto in Libia) - Difesa.It*. [https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op\\_intern\\_corso/op\\_ippocrate/Pagine/default.aspx](https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/op_ippocrate/Pagine/default.aspx).
- Mishra, K. P. "Fukuyama's End of History: Triumph of the Liberal State", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 68, no. 3, 2007.
- Mfzly.com. *Misurata Free Zone*, 3 April 2021. <https://mfzly.com/en/about-mfz/>.
- Mobley, T. "The Belt and Road Initiative: Insights from China's Backyard", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Air University Press, 2019. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu>.
- Mohamed, I. M. G. "Foreign Intervention and the Process of State Failure Case Study on Libya", *CUNY Academic Works*, 2019. [https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc\\_etds\\_theses/806](https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/806)
- Mohsen, M. *Health Ministry Raises Death Toll of Wednesday's Clashes to 638*, Daily News Egypt, 16 August 2013. <https://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/08/16>.
- Molnár, A. et al. "The Internationalisation of the Conflict in Libya", *AARMS*, vol. 20, no. 3, Academic and Applied Research in Military (AARMS) and Public Management Science, 2021. <https://www.proquest.com/openview>
- Molnár, A; & Komlósi, O. *Az Európai Unió mediterrán térséggel összefüggő kapcsolata. Párbeszéd és konfliktusok. Dialogue and conflicts*, Dialóg Campus, 2019. <https://core.ac.uk>.
- Ndiaga, T. *Burkina Faso Marks Official End of French Military Operations on Its Soil*, Reuters, 20 February 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/burkina-faso-marks-official-end-french-military-operations-its-soil-2023-02-19/>.
- ntclibya.org. *Founding Statement of the Interim Transitional National Council | The Libyan Republic - The Interim Transitional National Council*, 10 March 2011.
- OECD. *Where does France import Crude Petroleum from?*. <https://oec.world/en/profile>.
- Operationirini.eu. *Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI: Mission*. <https://www.operationirini.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/6.RHIB-speeding-Copy.jpg>.
- Pérez García, J. A. *Unipolaridad y hegemonía imperialista. ¿Sin respuesta?*, CIEM, 2017.
- Phillip, A. *Trump Says He Does Not See Expanded Role for U.S. in Libya beyond ISIS Fight*, Washington Post, 20 April 2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-does-not-see-expanded-role-for-us-in-libya-beyond-isis-fight/2017/04/20/2e2b735c-25ff-11e7-a1b3-faff0034e2de\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-he-does-not-see-expanded-role-for-us-in-libya-beyond-isis-fight/2017/04/20/2e2b735c-25ff-11e7-a1b3-faff0034e2de_story.html).
- Preussen, W. *Russian Oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin Admits He Created the Mercenary Wagner Group*, POLITICO, 26 September 2022.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- <https://www.politico.eu/article/evgeny-prigozhin-admits-that-he-created-the-wagner-group/>.
- Ramani, S. *Where Does China Stand on the Libya Conflict?*, 18 June 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/where-does-china-stand-on-the-libya-conflict/>.
- Ramonet, I. *Guerras del siglo XXI. El imperio contra Irak*. DEBOLSILLO, 2004.
- Reuters. *Excerpts from Libya Contact Group Chair's Statement*, 25 July 2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-libya-meeting-excerpts-refile-idUKTRE76E3GJ20110715>.
- Reuters. *East Libyan Forces Say Took Part in Egyptian Strikes in Derna*, 26 May 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-egypt-idUSKBN18M2MP>.
- RFI. *Libya Lawmakers Approve Interim Govt in Key Step towards Elections*, 10 March 2021. <https://www.rfi.fr>.
- Roberts, H. *Meloni and Macron Clash over Migrants*, POLITICO, 11 November 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/giorgia-meloni-emmanuel-macron-italy-france-clash-migrant-ship-ocean-viking/>.
- Salyk-Virk, M. *Airstrikes, Proxy Warfare, and Civilian Casualties in Libya*, New America, June 2020. <https://d1y8sb8igg2f8e.cloudfront.net>
- Schmitt, E; & Walsh, D. *U.S. Missiles Found in Libyan Rebel Camp Were First Sold to France*, The New York Times, 9 July 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/09/world/middleeast/us-missiles-libya-france.html>.
- Sharma, M. *BRICS Common Currency Soon? India, China Step up to Counter US Dollar's Dominance*, WION, 3 April 2023. <https://www.wionews.com/business-economy/brics-common-currency-soon-india-china-step-up-to-counter-us-dollars-dominance-578660>.
- Sizer, L. *Libya's Terrorism Challenge. Assessing the Salafi-Jihadi Threat*, Middle East Institute (Counterterrorism Series), October 2017. <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files>.
- Information Office - General Command of the Libyan Armed Forces. *Speech of the Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar during the celebration of the 71st anniversary of Libya's independence in Benghazi* (Arabic), 22 December 2022. <https://acortar.link/sd64b8>.
- Stamouli, N. *EastMed: A Pipeline Project That Ran Afoul of Geopolitics and Green Policies*, POLITICO, 18 January 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eastmed-a-pipeline-project-that-ran-afoul-of-geopolitics-and-green-policies/>.
- Stamouli, N. *Hello, Goodbye: Greek Minister Lands in Tripoli, Then Immediately Takes off Again*, POLITICO, 17 November 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/greek-foreign-minister-nikos-dendias-land-in-libya-and-immediately-leaves-naïla-mangoush/>.
- Stepanova, E. "Russia's Approach to the Conflict in Libya, the East-West Dimension and the Role of the OSCE"; A. Dessi; & E. Greco. *Search for Stability in Libya: OSCE's Role Between Internal Obstacles and External Challenges*, Istituto Affari Internazionali Research Studies, 2018. <https://www.iai.it>.
- Suchkov, M.A. *Analysis: Reports on Russian troops in Libya spark controversy*, Al-Monitor, 12 October 2018. <https://www.al-monitor.com>.
- Süddeutsche Zeitung. *Where is Gaddafi's money?*. <https://panamapapers.sueddeutsche.de>
- Tang Abomo, P. *R2P and the US Intervention in Libya*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>.
- Taşınar, Ö. "Turkey's Middle East Policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism". *Carnegie Papers*, no. 10, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2008/10/07>.
- The Arab Weekly. *Haftar accuses Turkey of violating arms embargo on Libya*, 21 December 2018. <https://theArabweekly.com/haftar-accuses-turkey-violating-arms-embargo-libya>.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- The Libya Observer. *300 Russian mercenaries fighting for warlord Khalifa Haftar in Libya, western news reports say*, 4 March 2019. <https://libyaobserver.ly>.
- The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China. *Full Text: The Communist Party of China and Human Rights Protection -- A 100-Year Quest*, 24 June 2021. [http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zqzxw/202106/t20210626\\_8919343.htm](http://my.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zqzxw/202106/t20210626_8919343.htm).
- The World Bank. *Belt and Road Initiative*, 28 March 2018. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>.
- Tidey, A. *Libya's UN-backed government suspends cooperation with France, accuses it of backing rebel forces*, Euronews, 19 April 2019. <https://www.euronews.com/2019/04/19>.
- Tierney, D. *The Legacy of Obama's 'Worst Mistake'*, The Atlantic, 15 April 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/>.
- Tolba, A. *Egypt, Qatar Trade Barbs in Dispute over Libya Strikes*, Reuters, 19 February 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-egypt-qatar-idUSKBNOLN07520150219>.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 2010: The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*, November 2010. <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents>.
- United States Department of State. *The U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability 10-Year Strategic Plan for Libya*, 24 March 2023. <https://www.state.gov/the-u-s-strategy-to-prevent-conflict-and-promote-stability-10-year-strategic-plan-for-libya/>.
- United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Publications | Intelligence Committee*, 15 January 2014. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/publications>
- United World International. *Macron's Failed Tour: Africa Did Not Believe the "New Partnership"*, 7 March 2023. <https://unitedworldint.com/28985-macrons-failed-tour-africa-did-not-believe-the-new-partnership/>.
- UN Press. *Security Council Approves "No-Fly Zone" over Libya, Authorizing "All Necessary Measures" to Protect Civilians*, 17 March 2011.
- UN Security Council. *Letter dated 29 November 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Libya Established pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council*, 9 December 2019. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3838591>.
- UNSMIL. *The Libyan Political AGREEMENT*, 17 December 2015. <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files>.
- UNSMIL. *Libyan Political Dialogue Forum*. <https://unsmil.unmissions.org>.
- US Department of State. *ABRAHAM ACCORDS PEACE AGREEMENT: TREATY OF PEACE, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND FULL NORMALIZATION BETWEEN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL*, 15 September 2020. [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UAE\\_Israel-treaty-signed-FINAL-15-Sept-2020-508.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/UAE_Israel-treaty-signed-FINAL-15-Sept-2020-508.pdf).
- Vandewalle, D. *A History of Modern Libya*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Varsori, A. *Relazioni internazionali dopo la guerra fredda. 1989-2022*, Il Mulino, 2022.
- Walter, B. F. "The New Civil Wars", *Annual Report of Political Science*, vol 20, 27 February 2017. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full>
- Wangkanggorup.com. *ABOUT US*. <http://www.wangkanggroup.com/en-us/about.html>.
- Warrick, J. *Blueprint for a Raid: Documents Shed Light on Plan to Buy U.S. Helicopter Gunships for Assault on Tripoli*, Washington Post, 23 February 2021. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/libya-coup-western-mercenaries-hifter/2021/02/19/cbdb2c90-55c7-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/libya-coup-western-mercenaries-hifter/2021/02/19/cbdb2c90-55c7-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d_story.html).
- Warsaw Institute. *Civil War in Libya. Russian Goals and Foreign Policy*, 30 April 2019. <https://warsawinstitute.org>
- Wehrey, F. *The Burning Shores: Inside the Battle for the New Libya*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux Inc, 2018.

## RUDERLESS LIBYA. External powers as predators of a failed state.

- Wehrey, F. *Among the Syrian Militiamen of Turkey's Libya Intervention*, The New York Review, 23 January 2020. <https://www.nybooks.com/online/2020/01/23>.
- Wehrey, F. *This War is Out of our Hands*, New America & ASU, September 2020. <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/this-war-is-out-of-our-hands/>.
- WikiLeaks. *Hillary Clinton Email Archive*, 1 April 2011. <https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/emailid/12659>.
- Wintour, P. *Qatar given 10 Days to Meet 13 Sweeping Demands by Saudi Arabia*, The Guardian, 23 June 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/23/close-al-jazeera-saudi-arabia-issues-qatar-with-13-demands-to-end-blockade>.
- Wintour, P. *Libya Crisis: Egypt's Sisi Backs Haftar Assault on Tripoli*. The Guardian, 14 April 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/14/libya-crisis-egypt-sisi-backs-haftar-assault-on-tripoli>.
- Wintour, P. *Greece Expels Libyan Ambassador in Row over Maritime Boundaries*, The Guardian, 6 December 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/06>.
- Wintour, P; & Stephen, C. *Libyan Rival Leaders Agree to Ceasefire after Macron-Hosted Talks*, The Guardian, 25 July 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/25/france-raises-hopes-of-deal-between-libyan-rival-factions>.
- Xin, L. *China Welcomes Rapprochement between Saudi Arabia, Syria*, Global Times, 24 March 2023. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202303/1287912.shtml>.
- Zaptia, S. *China's Wangkang Establishes Its First Libyan Company in Misrata Free Zone*, LibyaHerald, 10 March 2023. <https://libyaherald.com/2023/03/chinas-wangkang-establishes-its-first-libyan-company-in-misrata-free-zone/>.
- Zaptia, S. *French Libyan Energy Forum, Paris 20 to 22 June*, LibyaHerald, 14 April 2023. <https://libyaherald.com/2023/04>.
- Zenn, J. *2019-09-01 UAE to Establish Military Base in Niger*, APAN Community, 6 May 2020. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-articles-singular-format/326246>.