

**THE 2011 LIBYAN CIVIL WAR:  
FROM THE FOUR-DECADE QADDAFI RULE  
TO THE FRENCH-LED NATO INTERVENTION**

**A Master's Thesis**

**by**

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**Ankara**

**January 2016**



*To my beloved mother*

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TO THE FRENCH-LED NATO INTERVENTION**

**Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences  
of  
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University**

**by**

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ANKARA**

**January 2016**

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE 2011 LIBYAN CIVIL WAR: FROM THE FOUR-DECADE QADDAFI RULE TO THE FRENCH-LED NATO INTERVENTION**

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**January 2016**

This thesis aims to investigate the exceptional case of the 2011 Libyan civil war, in which both a revolution and a foreign intervention took place, from a historical perspective based mainly on qualitative content analysis. In this regard, this thesis takes a deeper look at the events unfolding in Libya before and after the crisis erupted as well as analyzes the internal reasons behind the uprising and then its evolution into a civil war, the limits and excesses of the international response to the crisis in Libya within the context of the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine and its possible future uses, and lastly, the way in which France was involved in the Libyan

civil war and how the French national interests curtailed the Libyan peoples' efforts for a true revolution.

**Keywords:** Libyan Civil War, Qaddafi, NATO, France, Revolution, R2P, Sarkozy.

## **ÖZET**

### **2011 LİBYA SİVİL SAVAŞI: KIRK YILLIK KADDAFİ İKTİDARINDAN FRANSA LİDERLİĞİNDEKİ NATO MÜDAHALESİNE**

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Bu tez hem bir devrimin hem de dış müdahalenin gerçekleşmesi bakımından istisnai bir vaka olan 2011 Libya sivil savaşını nitel içerik analizine dayanan tarihsel bir bakış açısıyla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu tez kriz ortaya çıkmadan önce ve sonra olmak üzere, Libya’da meydana gelen olayları daha derin bir şekilde inceler, ayrıca ayaklanmanın arkasında yatan iç sebepleri ve sonrasında sivil savaşa evrimini; ‘koruma sorumluluğu’ doktrini kapsamında Libya’daki krize verilen uluslararası cevabın eksikliklerini ve aşırılıklarını, bunun yanı sıra, doktrin gelecekte tekrar kullanılıp kullanılmayacağını ve son olarak Fransa’nın Libya sivil



savaşına nasıl müdahil olduđu ile Fransa milli çıkarlarının Libya halkının gerçek bir devrim mücadelesi vermesinin önüne geçmesi meselesini analiz eder.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Libya Sivil Savaşı, Kaddafi, NATO, Fransa, Devrim, R2P, Sarkozy.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: QADDAFI RULE IN LIBYA.....	7
2.1 Introduction .....	7
2.2 The Military Coup (1969-1973).....	8
2.3 The Green Book (1973-1986) .....	12
2.4 Updating the Revolution (1986-2000) .....	22
2.5 Catching Up with the New Millennium (2003-2011) .....	29
2.6 Conclusion.....	34
CHAPTER III: THE 2011 LIBYAN CIVIL WAR .....	36
3.1 Introduction .....	36

3.2 A Brief History of the Libyan Civil War in 2011 .....	37
3.3 Responsibility to Protect Doctrine in Libya .....	48
3.3.1 Emergence of Responsibility to Protect.....	48
3.3.2 Exercise of the Doctrine in Libyan Case .....	50
3.4 Conclusion.....	53
CHAPTER IV: FRANCE AND LIBYA .....	56
4.1 Introduction .....	56
4.2 France and Libya before 2011 .....	57
4.3 French Position in Libyan Civil War .....	62
4.3.1 First Reactions from France.....	62
4.3.2 Operation Harmattan.....	69
4.3.3 NATO's Intervention.....	71
4.3.4 French Intelligence and Covert Activities .....	73
4.4 Conclusion.....	75
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION.....	78
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	82

## **CHAPTER I:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until the discovery of oil in the late 1950s, Libya was an extremely poor country with little opportunity for farming along the coastal lines. What is more, it had a terrible colonial experience and suffered under Italian rule until its independence on 24 December 1951. This so-called independence reflects the design of the winners of the Second World War, and the monarchy in power functioned like a protectorate to the Great Powers, particularly the US.

After the military coup in 1969, a young military officer with nationalist and pan-Arabic aspirations, Qaddafi, came to power, changing the fate of the country for over four decades. Under his rule, the social welfare of the Libyan people increased quite dramatically thanks to the oil revenues, yet they were deprived of true freedom due to the implementation of Qaddafi's most famous *Green Book*, embracing a theory in between communism and Islam, namely 'Third Universal Theory'.

By challenging the Western countries, particularly the US in Middle Eastern politics and France in Africa, Qaddafi's grand aspirations to become a leader of the Arab states, following in Nasser's footsteps, and then 'the king of kings' in Africa made him the object of dislike not only by the Western countries, but also by leaders in the Middle East and Africa. Nevertheless, his true isolation came with the imposition of multilateral sanctions upon his country in 1992 for his sponsorship or suspected sponsorship of terrorism.

The sanctions period led the Libyan government to take several measures in the face of the social resentment against Qaddafi, since the people were used to the distributive largesse of the regime up to that time. Although the measures taken in the field of economy included the privatization of inefficient state sectors, some steps were also taken to soften state control over peoples' daily lives with the initiative of the neoliberal reformers employed in the government cadres. When the sanctions were lifted in 2003, Libya opened its doors to growth-promoting investment again, after almost a decade.

As is known, Libya holds a strategic position in North Africa with its abundant natural resources such as oil and water, which makes it a profitable target for the US and European countries. As soon as the uprisings erupted in February 2011, the Western countries, with the UK, US and particularly France playing the leading role, rushed in to Libya to get their piece of the pie from the new government by signing favorable oil contracts.

The Libyan civil war and the subsequent NATO intervention in the country in 2011 are the main subjects of this thesis. The rapid response of the international community to the Libyan crisis and the consequences of that response became a hot topic of debate among political and academic circles and occupied the agenda for quite a long time. The Libyan civil war remains as an exceptional case in which an attempt at a revolution and then a foreign intervention took place. In this regard, this thesis asks the following questions. What consequences arise from a revolution attempt if a foreign intervention takes place simultaneously? How did French national interests and politics overshadow the Libyan peoples' call for freedom and democracy, given the fact that France played the leading role in the military intervention? Lastly, what are the implications of the NATO intervention in Libya for other calls for intervention in different parts of the world, particularly in Syria now? In order to answer these questions, this thesis takes a deeper look at: the events unfolding in Libya before and after the crisis erupted as well as explains the internal reasons behind the uprising and then its evolution into a civil war; the limits and excesses of the international response to the crisis in Libya within the context of the 'responsibility to protect' doctrine; the way in which France was involved in the Libyan civil war and the reasons behind its leading role in the military intervention; and lastly the implications of the NATO intervention for the future of the 'responsibility to protect' doctrine in other cases such as Syria.

Before the summary of the content, methodology of this thesis needs to be explained. This thesis will be based on qualitative 'content analysis,' which is a research method used "to make valid inferences from text" (Weber, 1990, p. 9). Yet,

the numbers and statistics will be used to support the qualitative arguments. In order to grasp the existing literature and discussions on the subject, primary as well as secondary sources will be examined thoroughly. As one primary source, the speeches of French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Juppé will be analyzed to get first-hand information on the activities and opinions of the French government. Moreover, books, journal and newspaper articles, reports of humanitarian organizations and UN documents will be used to evaluate and track the events in the Libyan civil war. In a methodological way, this thesis will also make use of historical-interpretation methods in order to comprehend the dynamics of the Qaddafi era and thus transcend simple description of historical events.

Within this context of analytical research, Chapter II begins with an historical analysis of the four-decade Qaddafi rule in order to explain the unique features and dynamics of his regime, which paved the way for the Libyan civil war in 2011. It covers the period from Qaddafi's accession to power in 1969 via a military coup to the uprisings in 2011, which eventually led to his death. In order to keep the chapter comprehensive yet concise, this chapter focuses only on the key events and particularities of the Qaddafi era. First, it describes the first decade of Qaddafi's rule, which was marked by his nationalist and pan-Arabic aspirations, resulting in a wave of nationalizations. Then, the emergence of the Green Book and its effects on society, governance and economy will be elaborated in order to illuminate the unique structure of Libya. The chapter continues with the reform and sanctions period, which isolated Libya from the rest of the world. Lastly, it touches upon the regime's



efforts to reintegrate the country into the neoliberal world economy. It ends with the start of uprisings in Libya in February 2011.

Chapter III moves on to give a brief history of events that unfolded in the country from the start of Libyan civil war in February 2011 until the end of the subsequent NATO intervention in late October of the same year. First, it explains the reasons behind the civil uprisings against the regime while describing how an uprising evolved into a civil war. Then, the chapter covers the international response to the crisis in Libya, including the NATO intervention with its limits and excesses. In the second section of the chapter, the emergence of the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine, with its original intentions and deliberations, will be explained in detail. Lastly, the chapter analyzes the major difficulties encountered when the doctrine was put into practice in the Libyan case; the implications of the NATO intervention in Libya for potential future applications of the doctrine, and how that intervention affected the Libyan peoples’ attempt at fundamental political change.

Chapter IV focuses on France’s leading role in driving the international community to war in Libya. It analyzes the complex relations between France and Libya before the Libyan civil war in 2011 to provide a clearer sense of the dynamics between these two countries after Qaddafi’s accession to power in 1969. The chapter then goes on to explain how and why France took the leading role in the military intervention against the Qaddafi regime, seeming to reverse its previous cordial relations. Allegations of corruption against Sarkozy as well as French intelligence and covert affairs entities will be discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the chapter touches upon the possible reasons behind the French involvement in the Libyan civil

war and how French national interests prevailed over the Libyan peoples' call for freedom and democracy.

## **CHAPTER II:**

### **QADDAFI RULE IN LIBYA**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter analyzes the four-decade Qaddafi rule in Libya in four different sections with respect to their time period with an aim to reveal the dynamics and unique features of the rule, which paved the way for the Libyan civil war in 2011. I followed the chronological order so as to provide a consistency in and between the sections. In that regard, the first section covers the period from the military coup in 1969 to the first oil boom in 1973. Second section focuses on the period between 1973 and 1986 underlining the emergence of the Green Book and its effects on the country. Third section deals with the reforms and sanctions period which took place between the years of 1986 and 2000. Fourth section describes the efforts of the Qaddafi regime to reintegrate into the international community from 2003 onwards till the end of the regime in 2011.

## **2.2 The Military Coup (1969-1973)**

The military coup, which took place on 1 September 1969, marks the beginning of Qaddafi's almost four-decade rule in Libya. Led by the young Captain Qaddafi back then, the coup, also known as al-Fateh Revolution, put an end to the Sanussi monarchy "while the king was vacationing in Turkey" (Ahmida, 2005, p. 78). The monarchy was unable to rule the country effectively by breeding corruption, nepotism and cronyism particularly during the last years of its rule (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 76). Close affiliation of the monarchy with the West, allowing foreign military bases on the Libyan territory, added to the tension between the monarchy and the military, particularly in the aftermath of the Six-Day War that boosted Arab nationalism in the region (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 79).

The country's new leaders, Qaddafi and his young friends from the army, mostly came from middle class and less prestigious tribes, which had almost no association with the monarchy (Ahmida, 2005, p. 79). Therefore, it was no surprise that the young revolutionaries embraced a populist and revolutionary rhetoric while promoting their revolution. Qaddafi was a personal admirer of the President Nasser who was seen as a timeless hero in Arab world and he pursued Arab nationalism and unity in the Libyan Revolution (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 79). Accordingly, during the first two decades of his rule, Qaddafi proposed seven different unity plans with the Arab world, an ambition to be renounced for the pan-African unity in later years (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 86).

In general, the coup was bloodless and the revolutionaries did not confront any considerable opposition, even from the king's guards since the people were dissatisfied with the monarchy's corruption and mismanagement (Harris, 1986, p. 14). Once in power, the removal of foreign military bases and troops was placed on the top of Qaddafi's political agenda (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 79). Furthermore, the new regime purged the monarchy's elites and the anti-revolutionary elements quickly except for the oil sector in which they had neither the expertise nor the qualified personnel to manage it effectively (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 81). The oil industry was vital for the survival of the country since "one year after the revolution, oil provided almost 99% of Libya's revenues and constituted all of its exports" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 88). Hence, it was for the regime's own good to not to try to nationalize the oil sector under these circumstances.

In order to increase its legitimacy within the country, the revolutionary regime, with the help of increasing oil revenues, followed a number of socialist economic policies such as significant government spending on literacy, healthcare and education, rises in minimum wages, provision of interest-free loans, distribution of lands to farmers and government subsidies for the construction of houses (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 87). Moreover, Libyan citizens, having been excluded from economic activities in the past decade, enjoyed more favorable terms of participation in government contracts and commercial business ventures under the new regime (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 87). "Libya maintained a very high standard of living for its citizens that was comparable to that found in many of the Mediterranean countries in Europe" (Boyle, 2013, p. 85).

Apart from the oil sector, which depended on foreign capital and expertise, the Libyan economy with respect to other sectors was suffering from low investment and unskilled labor force. “In 1969 agriculture and manufacturing contributed only 2.4% and 2% of the country’s GDP, respectively”; even worse, most of the active population was employed in these two inefficient sectors (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 91).

Although Qaddafi was opposed to the Western states, particularly the US in his rhetoric, he did not engage in an open confrontation with it during the first decade of his rule. Considering the fact that Libyan economy heavily depended on oil and accordingly on the Western technology and expertise to make it a sustainable resource, the regime had to maintain its cordial relations with the West whether liked it or not. However, the regime could extend its leverage over international oil companies by using the bargaining advantage, as it had “the highest-quality-low-sulphur oils,” most of which was still unexplored at the time and geographical proximity to European countries, making it “easy and cheap to import” ( Campbell, 2013, p. 88). Thus, Libya was always a center of attraction for the oil companies.

After the coup, young Libyans sought employment opportunities in the Libyan army since it stood out as one of the two main avenues of social advancement in the country. Not surprisingly, “the army’s size almost doubled overnight,” even after removing all the former officers in higher ranks (Vandewalle; 2012, p. 81). According to El-Fathaly and Palmer (1995), most of the recruitments were done from tribes which were not favorable to the monarchy, but loyal to the Qaddafi regime inasmuch as the leaders of the new regime wanted to create a secure environment for themselves (pp. 170-173).

A close reading of Ayoub (1987) reveals the fact that Qaddafi was always a sincere Muslim though he was criticized by the Islamists inside and outside the country for his 'unique' ideas. Back then the Libyan 'ulama' was affiliated with the Sanussi monarchy and for that reason they had been discredited by the revolutionary regime (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 87). Until the full consolidation of the power, Qaddafi did not dare to publicly oppose the 'ulama'; instead he banned alcohol, closed a few churches and nightclubs and implemented 'shariah' law in order to demonstrate his dedication to Islam (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 87). Therefore, Islam was not just Qaddafi's faith, but was also "seen as a crucial element in ensuring the regime's survival and success" (Joffé, 1995, p. 145).

According to the new Constitution of December 1969, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), composed of Qaddafi and other prominent revolutionaries, was designated as the supreme political authority in the country (Libya Const. art.18). As early as 1971, Qaddafi called for popular rule through Popular Congresses, an initiative later abandoned due to lack of interest among apolitical Libyan citizens (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 81). Owing to the failure of the previous model, the regime then wanted to create a more controlled system of mobilization, which led to the establishment of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU) the same year and it later banned all political activity outside the ASU (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 82).

Unsatisfied with the level of popular participation to the government, in 1973, Qaddafi announced the Popular Revolution that can be described as a "bottom-up mobilization" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 83). As is implied in its name, the Popular

Revolution meant more intensive participation of the people at the local level and intended to “create a locally based, youthful leadership, drawn from the lower-middle and lower classes that would have a substantially different socialization and education from that of the country’s traditional elites” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 84). As a result, government officials were quite young and inexperienced, and to make matters worse, the increasing number of government agencies at local levels added to the existing confusion and chaos in the country. “The country’s bureaucracies - much like the army – were targeted as a means for social advancement and control by the new regime” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 84).

When the first oil boom took place in 1973, the revolutionary regime had already consolidated its political power within the country. Moreover, a wave of nationalization had started in the Libyan economy, bringing almost all aspects of economic life under state control and leaving almost no space for private entrepreneurship in the forthcoming years (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 93).

### **2.3 The Green Book (1973-1986)**

Upon the introduction of the Popular Revolution with its popular congresses and committees in 1973, Qaddafi attempted to skip the regularized procedures of the ASU and used it as a tool for legitimizing the decisions of the regime (Djaziri, 1995, p. 190-193). However, this dual system of governance only created more confusion and chaos in the country and provoked a clash of ideas within the RCC. There were



the ones who wanted a more elaborate and strategic economic plan so as to deal with the country's political and economic problems in a technocratic fashion, whereas the others were eager to pursue the regime's ideological goals and waste the country's resources for those ends (Ahmida, 2005, p. 80). "The disagreement led to the country's first attempted coup in August 1975" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 98).

Soon after the coup attempt, Qaddafi came up with the first volume of the Green Book, which was going to be "the guideline of the revolution" in future decades (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 100). Qaddafi was always cautious in promoting his revolution with regard to Islam, particularly in *The Green Book*, where he addressed a wider audience, but he sincerely believed that "Islam and politics cannot be separated" (Ayoub, 1987, p. 110). Therefore, according to Ayoub (1987), "[h]is [Qaddafi's] faith in, and commitment to, Islam have provided the primary focus, framework and impetus for his social ideas and political actions" (p. 126).

*The Green Book*, which was written by Qaddafi (1983) himself in three volumes, briefly suggests that "democracy is the supervision of the people by the people" without any intermediaries and all resources that the country has, in fact, belong to the people; moreover, people are in charge of the country's administrative and bureaucratic institutions by means of popular congresses and committees.

In Qaddafi's political vision, representational democracy was a 'false democracy,' since even if the majority of the citizens vote for the victorious party, the rest of the people were still being ruled by those for whom they did not vote (Qaddafi, 1983, p. 6). The ultimate solution, in Qaddafi's opinion, to the problem of

‘true democracy’ lied in the unique system of popular congresses and committees which allowed citizens to participate directly in government (Qaddafi, 1983, pp. 22-25). This new system of governance in Libya was a bottom-up mobilization, which enabled the basic popular congresses at the local level to convey their demands to the counterparts at the national level (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 103).

In 1977, Qaddafi renamed Libya as ‘the Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriyya’<sup>1</sup> and before that in January 1976 the ASU was integrated into the General People’s Congress, restricting all political activity outside the popular congresses (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 103). Although it seemed as if all political control was in the hands of the people, in reality, certain significant areas such as foreign policy, the police, the army, the oil sector and the budget of the country were not within the scope of popular rule (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 104). Decisions on these matters were either taken in a technocratic fashion, as in the case of oil sector, or by Qaddafi himself without any notable opposition since he had removed all the dissident voices in the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt against his regime in 1975. Furthermore, it would be meaningless in any way to oppose the government since people were the governors of themselves and they owned all the country’s resources in theory. Qaddafi placed himself outside and above the existing structures of the government system, and by doing so, he evaded all his responsibilities as the leader of the country:

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<sup>1</sup> Jamahiriyya means “the state of the masses” (Ahmida, 2005: 72).

You should understand that since 1977 we no longer have any constitutional prerogative on your economic, political, and administrative matters. Please, let us be clear about this point. You may seek our advice; we are ready to play the role of revolutionary instigators as our presence warrants this. However, we are restricted by people's authority...People's authority has become restrictive even on revolutionaries...it restricts even Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi; I cannot act. (Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], 1993, pp. 19-20, cited in Vandewalle, 2012).

As regards to the economy in the Jamahiriyya, Qaddafi continued to apply his populist measures. The country's first two economic programs, namely the *Three-Year Economic and Social Development Plans*, emerged in 1970 and 1973 respectively, targeting the diversification of the economy and prioritizing the agricultural sector so that the country would meet its food needs (Ghanem, 1987, p. 62). Quiet ambitiously, "the total contribution of the non-oil sectors to the national economy was expected to rise almost 50% by the end of the plan" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 92). Nonetheless, the plan was unrealistic despite the huge allocation of resources, as the regime, with its young and inexperienced cadres, lacked the necessary expertise (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 92).

After 1975, with the introduction of the Qaddafi's 'Third Universal Theory', which was formulated as "an alternative to capitalism and Marxism" in *the Green Book*, Libya entered into a new phase of economic planning in a quite radical fashion (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 96). Qaddafi (1983) thought every citizen should benefit from the country's resources equally. However, in the current economic system, wage workers, whether employed by the state or a private enterprise, were nothing but slaves. In order to abolish that slavery, they must be regarded as "partners in production," Qaddafi argued (p.41). He furthered his ideas by prohibiting citizens

from hiring taxis, renting houses and employing maids, since it meant controlling the need of another at the expense of his or her freedom (pp. 39-62). As a result, with the support of the state, “renters of apartments and houses found themselves owners of their dwellings, paying off small monthly mortgages to the government” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 106).

After a provocative speech in which Qaddafi referred to the country’s entrepreneurs as parasites, the economic directives of *the Green Book* were extended to include the nationalization of all commercial private businesses within the Jamahiriyya in 1980, making a remarkable change in the history of Libya (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 106-107). Afterwards, the government decided to change the currency of the country so as to control private wealth as well. “All Libyans were thereby forced to declare their assets and to exchange their old currency, within one week, for limited amounts of new dinars” (Vandewalle, 2012, p.107). Eventually, the state controlled each and every aspect of economic life, including the distribution of all basic needs (Vandewalle, 1995b, p. 212; Ghanem, 1987, p. 64).

Qaddafi’s ambitious economic and political initiatives essentially depended on oil revenues, which increased along with the price hikes associated with the 1973 and 1979 oil crises. As “the country was awash with petrodollars by the end of 1974,” the planners of the economy designed a new economic plan that would last five years, aiming to overcome the development challenges (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 108-109). The plan, known as *the 1976-1980 Five-Year Social and Economic Development Plan*, intended to diversify the economy by using oil revenues for development of non-oil sectors, particularly agricultural and manufacturing

industries, which were also seen as key remedies to the country's unemployment problem (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 110). Moreover, the government made huge investments in education in order to diminish the heavy reliance on expatriates, hoping to replace them with qualified Libyan nationals (Vandewalle, 1995a, p. 21). However, things did not go as expected and "by the end of 1979, an estimated 100,000 Libyans, many of them well-educated and possessing advanced degrees from western universities, had left the country" (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 110-111). "In 1980, the government simultaneously announced a twenty-year, long-term economic plan and an intermediary Five-Year Plan," both of which had similar features and outcomes with the previous one (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 114). Despite the fact that enormous resources were dedicated to the implementation of the plans, very little was achieved in the end because the regime had embraced a populist style of economic management instead of a technocratic one with essential regulatory and administrative capacities (Vandewalle, 1995b, p. 216).

Aside from the economic experiments described above, Qaddafi continued his experiments in the political sphere as well. The governmental structure in the Jamahiriyya, with the establishment of the Revolutionary Authority in 1979, became a binary one: On the one hand, there was a formal structure of government with popular congresses and committees, seemingly encouraging popular rule, but on the other hand, Qaddafi had created an informal center of power and authority around himself, composed of his trusted friends and regime loyalists (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 117). The latter was in charge of security and intelligence organizations that would

guarantee the regime survival, which was considered to be under threat especially after the coup attempt in 1975 (Vandewalle, 1995b, p. 210).

Already in 1977, Qaddafi created the Revolutionary Committees which were regarded “as instruments for further mobilization and indoctrination” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 118). Initially, they were responsible for encouraging popular participation in the formal structures of the government and implementing *the Green Book* directives. However, afterwards their scope of authority was extended to secure the regime survival and defend the revolution at all costs abroad and at home, particularly after the Reagan administration became more determined to overthrow Qaddafi by manipulating Libyan exile groups (Boyle, 2013, p. 49). “This led to a number of reprisals and assassinations abroad that would later contribute to the Jamahiriyya’s worsening relations with the West” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 120). Last but not least, the Revolutionary Committees were authorized to establish revolutionary courts based upon the revolutionary law, leading up to numerous arrests and executions (Mattes, 1995, p. 101).

Qaddafi’s enthusiasm for the Revolutionary Committees did not last long. He realized the resentment of the society in the face of the vicious actions of the Revolutionary Committees (Mattes, 1995, pp. 106-107). He immediately restricted their powers and created a new unit called ‘Guards of the Revolution’ (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 122).

Qaddafi was able to garner wide popular support for his revolution since he was determined to portray it as a collective action. For that purpose, he nurtured anti-

Western and anti-colonial feelings in his speeches by stressing the common sufferings and exploitations at the hands of the colonizers (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 123). It was a justified argument when we consider the fact that almost one-third of Libyans had been decimated under the colonial rule of Italy (Boyle, 2013, p. 11). Moreover, by invoking the uniqueness of Libya and the Libyan people, he intended to create a sense of unity within the Jamahiriyya and succeeded partially in doing so (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 123). With the object of appealing to masses, Qaddafi claimed that “the revolution had reinstated true Islam”; in fact, he had replaced Islamic law with secular laws without ever acknowledging it officially (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 124). Additionally, Qaddafi’s own charisma played an important role in gaining support for the revolution. He established direct contacts with ordinary Libyan citizens in a way they never experienced with the previous monarchy’s elites (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 125). As Ahmadi (2005) clearly illustrates, Qaddafi “speaks and dresses like a tribesman – a badawi – from the hinterland, and leads prayers as an Imam or Amir al Muminin<sup>2</sup>...” (p.72). Furthermore, he used to conduct his business meetings in his tent and even carried out this practice abroad, for which he was mocked by the West (Pidd, 2009; Saghié, 2007). “In actuality it represented his determination to maintain his cultural identity, symbolic of his ongoing commitment to his people, rather than to the imperial West” (Boyle, 2013, p. 12).

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<sup>2</sup> Amir al Muminin means “the prince of the faithful” (Ahmadi, 2005: 72).

Although *the Green Book* wanted to create a stateless society in the Jamahiriyya, it ended up in paving the way for the state to penetrate every aspect of social and economic life. According to Vandewalle (2012), this is one of the reasons that a strong opposition against the regime could not be formed at home and abroad (p.127). Moreover, people showed a high level of indifference to political matters as long as they enjoyed at least some fraction of the oil revenue distributed by the government. The peoples' congresses, on the other hand, allowed and encouraged citizens to voice their individual complaints without ever trying to create any oppositional group (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 127).

When it comes to the relations with the West, one could say that they varied from year to year according to the current situation in the country. During the first decade after the coup, the relations between Libya and the United States were quite pragmatic and cautious. Apart from the interest in Libyan oil, the US was “concerned about keeping the country outside the Soviet Union’s orbit” and Qaddafi’s oppositional rhetoric to the West was mostly for the purpose of internal legitimacy (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 129).

When we reached the 1980s, however, Libya’s relations with West, particularly with the United States, began to deteriorate. As the time went by, “the United States accused Libya of supporting terrorism, of engaging in subversion in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, of boycotting the Middle East peace process, and, eventually, of attempting to produce weapons of mass destruction” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 130).



In order to keep Libya under control, the US started to impose sanctions on the country as early as 1978 and prohibited the sale of all military equipment. Thereafter, “Libya was put on the list of state sponsors of terrorism, which extended the ban to include most economic assistance to the country” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 130). When Reagan took office in 1981, the relations with Libya took a violent course when the US shot down two Libyan planes above the Gulf of Sirt, in other words, in Libyan territorial waters (Boyle, 2013, p. 50). Afterwards, the US urged all its citizens to leave Libya and extended the scope of sanctions imposed on the Jamahiriyya (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 131). Ultimately, the Reagan administration bombed Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986, upon the alleged explosion of a discotheque frequented by US soldiers in West Berlin (Boyle, 2013, p. 72). The US government with these bombings “attempted to murder the entire Qaddafi family sleeping in their home at night” (Boyle, 2013, p. 12) by attacking the home and the headquarters of Qaddafi at the El Azziziya in Tripoli (Boyle, 2013, p. 47). Qaddafi himself was shocked by the fact that the US could attack the Jamahiriyya and he expressed his sentiments as such: “Who would have thought that a superpower like the United States would come over to a small country like Libya and bomb innocent people sleeping in their homes during the middle of the night?” (Boyle, 2013, p. 96).

Contrary to the expectations of the US government that the Libyan people would overthrow Qaddafi soon after the attack, the 1986 bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi “elevated Colonel Qaddafi into the realm of epic myth” before the eyes of the public as he miraculously survived the attack upon his residence while his adopted daughter, Hana, was killed (Boyle, 2013, p. 97). “Whether the United States

government liked it or not, Qaddafi was incredibly popular with the common people of Libya” (Boyle, 2013, p. 85).

#### **2.4 Updating the Revolution (1986-2000)**

After living in opulence for years, Qaddafi now found himself surrounded by economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation by the West, particularly by the United States. Nonetheless, the impact of the US unilateral sanctions on Libya was relatively small, since the government was able to sell its oil to Europe until the imposition of the multilateral sanctions by the international community in 1992 (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 151). The US prohibition on the sale of technology crucial for the oil and aviation sector in Libya could also be alleviated by purchases from alternative sources at higher costs (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 152).

The USA’s military actions or threats towards Libya and Reagan’s obsession with overthrowing Qaddafi led to many terrorist attacks in different parts of the world targeting Western citizens (Boyle, 2013, p. 47). Moreover, Reagan’s pro-Israeli foreign policy in the Middle East added to the tension (Boyle, 2013, p. 40). However, the explosions of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 over Lockerbie and soon the French UTA 772 airliner over Niger in 1989 were used as pretexts by the USA, the UK and France to put more pressure on Libya in the international arena without presenting any concrete evidence. According to Boyle (2013), “Libya was being scapegoated by the C.I.A. and French intelligence” because at first, they were

blaming Iran, Syria and a Palestinian group but, all of a sudden, they changed their minds (p.107). Libya's attempts at negotiation and its offer to take the case to the World Court were all rejected by the US and UK without thinking twice about it (Boyle, 2013, p. 119). To make matters worse, the US impelled the international community to take more stringent measures against the Jamahiriyya, accusing the latter of sponsoring terrorism (St. John, 1987, p. 82). Therefore, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 731 and Resolution 748 in 1992 in order to curb the regime's so-called aggression. A year after publishing his book *Destroying Libya and World Order*, Boyle's prediction that the Lockerbie bombing was carried out by Iran in order to take the revenge of the Iran airbus precedent - which had been shot down by the USA - was admitted by a former Iranian intelligence officer, Abolghassem Meshabi (Rayner, 2014).

From 1992 onwards, the Libyan economy started to take its toll inasmuch as the multilateral sanctions added to the existing problems within the country. First and foremost, the Libyan petroleum sector was in urgent need of modernization as the limited and outdated technology in addition to the lack of qualified personnel had decreased the oil production considerably (Harris, 1986, p. 118). However, the West was determined to strike deep inside the main vein of the Libyan economy, so most of the sanctions "targeted the oil sector directly," leaving almost no option for recovery at hand (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 156). In order to attract international oil companies back to the country again, the technocrats at the Libyan National Oil Company (LNOC) offered highly favorable exploration and production sharing agreements (EPSA IIIs). "The strategy partially paid off: by the end of 1995 there

were two dozen foreign oil companies again operating in Libya” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 158).

When it comes to the most important incident that marked the second decade of the revolution, the US bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986, the defensive capacity of the country was revealed to be impotent. “The Libyans definitely would have liked to multilateralize their sources for arms supplies. But the U.S. government left Qaddafi with no alternative but to turn to the Soviets...” (Boyle, 2013, p. 88). To make matters worse, multilateral sanctions were imposed upon the country within a few years after Qaddafi’s refusal to hand over the suspects of the Lockerbie and the UTA 772 attacks.

With a view to alleviate the internal resentment towards the regime under worsening conditions, Qaddafi made a number of adjustments in political and economic spheres. In the political sphere, first, he curtailed the Revolutionary Committees “which had come to symbolize the most hated aspect of the revolutionary measures” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 138). Later, political prisoners were released, unrestricted travel abroad was authorized, security files on Libyan citizens were destroyed, confiscated passports were returned to their owners, passport issuance was entrusted to popular committees instead of security organizations, arbitrary arrests were terminated, revolutionary courts were abolished and a clear codification of all crimes was requested by the regime (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 141). As a part of his political liberalization campaign, Qaddafi introduced *the Great Green Charter of Human Rights of the Jamahiriyyan Era* in 1988. It consisted of 27 Articles, which were mostly in line with the directives of *the Green Book*. Most

notably, in the Charter, Qaddafi stressed the importance of the universal values and norms such as the sacredness of the right to live, to freedom of thought and expression, to work, to fair trial, to privacy and so on. Qaddafi even proposed to abolish the death penalty, but his proposition was refused by the Basic Popular Congress (Boyle, 2013, p. 12). According to Vandewalle (2012), “*the Green Charter*, if fully implemented, would in effect have put a halt to, and reversed, the arbitrariness and unpredictability of the country’s revolutionary decade” (p. 142). However, Qaddafi never intended it to be a binding document for the government in that the ambiguities of the rules and laws allowed the regime to maneuver flexibly under changing circumstances.

In addition to political liberalization efforts, the regime also attempted to liberalize the economy during the same period so as to create a sense of relief in the society. Trapped in the same fate together with all other oil states in the region, Libya was busy with the distribution of the country’s riches stemming from oil revenues, rather than establishing key institutions to regulate and develop the economy in a systematic manner (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 159). Another problem was the continuation of the excessive spending as it had become like a secret agreement signed between the people and the regime: the regime took care of the citizens’ needs in return for political compliance by the latter (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 160). Apart from the expenditures on social services at home, Qaddafi continued to spend huge amounts of money on military and support revolutionary uprisings abroad in the interest of exporting his revolution (Anderson, 1995, p. 227).

Far from addressing real economic challenges, Qaddafi launched two sets of economic liberalization attempts in 1987 and after 1990, both of which aimed to “reduce state involvement in the country’s economy” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 161). Nevertheless, this was not an easy task to accomplish given the very high level of state interference in the economy, as described briefly by Vandewalle (2012):

Despite the pretensions of popular management, all manufacturing, foreign and domestic retail trade, agriculture, and service provisions were highly centralized. Roughly two dozen trading companies were in charge of all manufacturing, industrial and agricultural imports, as well as those of foodstuffs and consumer goods. An estimated 70-75% of all Libyans were employees of the state. The creation of state supermarkets - called “popular markets” - in the 1970s had extended state control down to the retail level. As in many centrally managed economies – but exacerbated because of the ready availability of resources – the country’s economy was highly inefficient, marked by low productivity, and extremely high labor costs for almost exclusively foreign labor in all sectors (p.161).

In the end, the regime’s involvement in liberal economic reforms ended up with the re-opening of medium and small scale enterprises particularly in the service sector, by people unwilling to take great risks and make huge investments in an uncertain political environment (Vandewalle, 1995b, pp. 213-214). Accordingly, the US dollar became the currency of choice in daily economic life, which could be interpreted as a sign of distrust in the local economy (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 163).

Overall, the failure of the economic reforms could be linked to the absence of “functioning regulatory and administrative institutions that could support a market economy” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 164). Moreover, Qaddafi’s efforts to favor his supporters undermined his own principle of egalitarianism, creating a motivation for the opposition to revolt against the regime several times (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 165).

The uprisings during the early 1990s, particularly those by the Islamists, were quickly squashed by the Revolutionary Committees (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 145). Qaddafi was mostly hated by the Muslim fundamentalists due to the secular nature of his rule, his empowerment of women and his 'heretical' Green Book (Boyle, 2013, p. 13).

In addition to the internal economic and political problems as well as the fierce confrontation with the West, Qaddafi was also disappointed with the Arab world's silence in the face of the Arab-Israeli conflict. After embarking upon various unity schemes with the Arab states, he could not find the support he expected and focused instead on promoting pan-African unity, with the aim of projecting his power in sub-Saharan Africa (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 137). Surprisingly, his initiatives in Africa produced more concrete results than the ones experienced with the Arab world. In 1988, the Organization of African States declared that "its members would no longer enforce the UN sanctions unless the United States and Great Britain agreed to hold the trial of the Lockerbie suspects in a neutral country – one of the conditions under which Libya was willing to compromise with the UNSC" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 169).

In the meantime, Libya decided to invoke Article 14 of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Montreal Convention) by applying to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) so as to resolve the conflict over the extradition of the two Lockerbie suspects:

Article 14 1. Any dispute between two or more Contracting States concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention which cannot be settled

through negotiation, shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the Parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court (Montreal Convention, 1971).

In fact, Libya was already fulfilling its obligations under the Convention by prosecuting the two suspects of Lockerbie bombing according to its national law (Boyle, 2013, p.120). Yet, it was not enough for the UK and US. On 27 February 1998, first, the ICJ refused the objections of the US and UK by accepting that the Lockerbie case is governed by the Montreal Convention. Second, the Court decided that the case fell under their jurisdiction (Boyle, 2013, p. 130).

Concerned about the dilution of sanctions and after the decisions of the ICJ , the United States and Britain agreed to hold the trial at the US military base in Netherlands as a third country and Qaddafi surrendered the two suspects in 1999 (Boyle, 2013, p. 137-138). A bizarre split verdict was concluded by three Scottish judges at the court, arresting one of the suspects and releasing the other (Boyle, 2013, p. 141). In April 1999 the UN multilateral sanctions were suspended, as Libya started to comply with the international norms by promising compensation for the victims of the Lockerbie and the French UTA bombings as well as for the relatives of Yvonne Fletcher, a British police officer murdered by the Libyan officials during an anti-Qaddafi protest in London in 1984 (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 169). Eventually, thanks to the lifting of sanctions by the international community, “growth returned once more to the Libyan economy” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 159).



## **2.5 Catching Up with the New Millennium (2003-2011)**

The lifting of the multilateral sanctions in 1999 meant a partial relief for the regime; however, the continuation of the US unilateral sanctions on the country turned out to be an insurmountable barrier to economic development. The pressure from the families of the Lockerbie victims did not permit the US government soften its relations with Libya right away (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 174). Still, it became much more difficult for the USA to keep its unilateral sanctions in place after the settlement of the Lockerbie issue and the lifting of the UN sanctions. Furthermore, Qaddafi's immediate condemnation of the September 11 terrorist attacks and support for the US invasion of Afghanistan, considering it a justified act of self-defense, enhanced the rapprochement between the US and the Jamahiriyya (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 178).

By the year of 2003, most of the critical issues between Libya and the West had been settled. "The only major issue that remained of great concern to the United States in particular concerned Libya's attempt to produce unconventional weapons and WMDs [weapons of mass destruction]" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 180). Back in 1989, the USA had shot down two Libyan planes on the pretext that Libya was producing chemical weapons in Rabta, a plant which had been opened up for inspection not only by the USA, but also by the UN (Boyle, 2013, pp. 98-99). Nonetheless, the regime's decision to sign the WMD agreement in 2003 marked a new period of cordial relations with the West, clearing the way for numerous diplomatic and economic initiatives that would take place in the forthcoming years

(Vandewalle, 2012, p. 182). At that time, nobody would have ever anticipated that Qaddafi would become a staunch ally of the USA and even start to provide intelligence to the latter (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 201).

Apart from the warming relations with the West, in particular with the USA, the leadership of Libya also started to employ more moderate foreign policy tools towards the neighbors in the region. For example; despite the continuing fiery rhetoric against Israel, the regime accepted a two-state solution in Palestine and “gradually distanced itself from direct or indirect involvement in most of the regional insurgencies it had supported in the past,” as in Uganda, Chad, Tunisia and Egypt (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 179).

When the world entered the new millennium, it was quite clear that the Jamahiriyya needed fundamental political, social and economic reforms in order to integrate with the rest of the world after almost two decades of isolation. Qaddafi’s Western-educated son, Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi, pioneered the new reform period with great enthusiasm despite the challenges he faced (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 173). Together with the Prime Minister Shukri Muhammad Ghanem, former Trade and Economy Minister, Qaddafi’s son launched the third wave of liberalization and privatization in the country by drawing on the advice of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 183). According to the IMF Country Report (2003),

If Libya is to achieve higher growth rates and diversify its economy, the dominant role of the public sector needs to be significantly scaled down. The staff [IMF] commends the authorities for the recently implemented measures and urges them to take advantage of the current favorable macroeconomic

environment to implement wide-ranging reforms within the framework of a comprehensive and well-sequenced medium-term program to correct the cost/price structure, foster productivity growth, and ultimately generate higher rates of growth and employment (p.4).

Ultimately, these recommendations of the IMF led up to the privatization of 360 state companies, an act that was portrayed by the regime as “the extension of popular ownership” in order not to contradict the directives of *the Green Book* that were originally against private ownership (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 185).

Even in times of economic and political isolation, Libya continued to attract international companies due to its abundant oil reserves, most of which were still unexplored (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 176). Yet, the regime had to convince them to operate in Libya, as the economic sanctions and the political uncertainty lingering in the country at the time prevented them from making huge investments (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 176). Eventually, Libya announced the new incentives, known as EPSA IV, with highly favorable terms for the international oil companies after serious internal negotiations at LNOC. Soon, the companies rushed to the country and “proved once more the attractiveness of Libyan oil” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 186). Not surprisingly, “eleven of the fifteen oil exploration licenses went to US companies,” displaying the regime’s desire to return back to the good old days (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 186-187).

If the economic reforms, recommended by international financial institutions and initiated by the Prime Minister Ghanem and Saif al-Islam al-Qaddafi, were to succeed, quite a number of political and institutional reforms were required in the structure of the government (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 188-189). However, the old revolutionaries, siding with the Leader of the Revolution, did not welcome the idea

of structural reforms for their own interests and curtailed the efforts of “even someone as privileged as Saif al-Islam” (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 174). Notwithstanding the fact that Qaddafi did not enthusiastically support the reforms, he was well aware of the economic situation in the country, as understood from his own statements on AlJazeera.net (Qaddafi (2006), as cited in Vandewalle, 2012, p. 191):

We don't produce anything...We sell only oil and consume everything...The kind of trade in which you produce nothing and import goods in exchange for oil – it's a catastrophe...To explore for oil, to export it and earn money which you use to pay for imports, and to then sell those imports locally: This isn't prosperity. It doesn't lead to the nation's progress.

Despite the challenges arising from personal politics during the reform period between 2003 and 2011, “Libya's economy continued to show slow and incremental improvements toward greater efficiency in its regulatory capacities” regarding the laws such as Commercial Law, Customs Law, Income Tax Law and so on (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 192). Yet, more sustainable and structural reforms were abandoned for the sake of regime survival since “the regime loyalists whose profitability derives from political connections (...) would be unable to successfully compete in an economy characterized by transparency and rule of law” (Prashad, 2012, pp. 145-146).

As concerns the foreign policy of Libya, Qaddafi's long-term ambition of unity with the Arab world came to an end when he “finally walked out of the May 2004 meeting of the Arab League in Tunis” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 194). Weary of the Arab leaders' passivity in the face of regional developments, he started to seek opportunities for uniting with Africa. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Libya was

already present in sub-Saharan Africa, providing financial aid (Mattes, 1987, pp. 90-96) and meddling in internal affairs of other states (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 194). However, when we come to the 1990s, Qaddafi embraced a more moderate and diplomatic approach toward the region in an attempt to become the leader of the African Union (AU) - which he succeeded in doing so in 2009 - and break the diplomatic isolation imposed upon the country. His initiatives in the region bore fruit as the African states began to criticize the multilateral sanctions as early as 1994, claiming that the sanctions “affected not only the Libyan people, but African workers from neighboring countries as well” (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 196). In light of the fact that Libya had emerged as a hub for African workers during the Revolution, the African demands for the lifting of the sanctions over Libya were quite reasonable. Once the sanctions were lifted, there would be more job opportunities for African migrants.

In the wake of the lifting of the sanctions, Qaddafi was promoted by the West as a philosopher and a politician, whose ideas worthy of critical research and study in the international arena. For that purpose, a three million dollar campaign was launched by the Monitor Group, a multinational consulting firm hired by the regime for the reforms, and several important intellectuals and academics, ranging from Bernard Lewis to Francis Fukuyama, were invited to the Jamahiriyya to interview the Libyan leader (McConnel and Todd, 2011; Vandewalle, 2012, p. 202). Qaddafi’s engagement with those intellectuals and the world leaders in the West misled him into believing that his revolution was indispensable to the world (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 203).

## 2.6 Conclusion

As revolutionary leader of the Jamahiriyya, Qaddafi, ruled the country for over four decades until the dramatic end of his regime in 2011. Throughout the period, he acted as if he had no real power within the formal structures of the government; however, in reality he had consolidated all the power in himself, by creating different security and intelligence organizations that were directly accountable to him.

*The Green Book*, a collection of Qaddafi's utopian ideas on governance, changed the course of the state in an uncertain way due to its inner contradictions. Instead of creating a stateless society, he ironically ended up by bringing all aspects of social, political and economic life under state control, leaving no space for freedom of people. Moreover, the directives of *the Green Book* curtailed any chance of development in the economy and even hampered reform efforts in later years.

As the Libyan economy was heavily dependent on the oil revenues, the sanctions imposed upon the country and falling oil prices decreased the distributive largesse of the regime, causing unrest within the society. The liberalization attempts could not address the real problems of economy and divided the society further by creating inequalities as Qaddafi favored the supporters of the regime. Moreover, excessive spending on arms purchases, foreign interventions as well as infeasible development projects and plans added to the existing difficulties within the country.

When we came to the 1990s, the Revolution "had run its course inside Libya" (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 184). A new generation of young Libyans "for whom the

ideological battles and the rationale for the September revolution seemed less clear, and for whom the country's isolation and its lack of opportunities were deplorable" had emerged (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 136).

Although Qaddafi's image was burnished by the West, for the sake of petrodollars, during the last few years of the regime, in fact, he was still "the mad dog of the Middle East" (Vandewalle, 2011). The uprisings against the regime in 2011 quickly revealed the hidden agenda of the West: Qaddafi must go! (Obama, Cameron, & Sarkozy, 2011).

## **CHAPTER III:**

### **THE 2011 LIBYAN CIVIL WAR**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to draw a broad picture of the Libyan civil war that erupted in 2011, by including all sides of the conflict and the international response to the crisis. To that end, the first section narrates a brief story of the events unfolded in the Libyan civil war from the start of the uprising in February 15, 2011 to the most-debated NATO intervention by limiting the time frame till the latter's end on October 31, 2011. After giving this brief account of the events, the second section deals first with the emergence of the 'responsibility to protect' doctrine in the literature and then its revival by the Security Council Resolution 1973, highlighting its pitfalls in the case of Libya and potential future applications of the doctrine. Lastly, this chapter concludes with the damage done by NATO to the Libyan peoples' revolution attempt.



### **3.2 A Brief History of the Libyan Civil War in 2011**

The uprisings in Libya, which eventually led to regime change, started on 15 February 2011 with the arrest of Fathi Tarbel, a human rights activist and a leading lawyer who wanted more compensation for the families of the 1300 victims killed in the 1996 Abu Sulaim prison massacre (Joffé, 2011, p. 523). On that very same day, people in Benghazi encouraged by some activists attacked police stations and public buildings (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p. 16). Two days later, a ‘Day of Rage’ was planned by the Libyans by using social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (“Jour de Colère”, 2011) and demonstrations spread all over the country, not just in the east but also in the west though far less supported in the latter. Qaddafi’s support for the tribes that were loyal and close to him, which meant excluding the ones in the East associated with the monarchy in the past, had provoked the latter to nurture resentment against him over the years (Prashad, 2012, p. 113). Particularly, Benghazi was ignored to such an extent that it “looked like an urban wasteland rather than the second biggest city of the country” (Haimzadeh, 2011). Moreover, unlike in the bread riots in Tunisia and Egypt, the peoples’ anger against the regime in Libya was the result of “the suppression of genuine democratic opportunities for the population” (Prashad, 2012, p. 93). Ironically, Qaddafi’s son, Saif al-Islam and reformers associated with him had “awakened a new sentiment that bubbled into protests” through their liberalization efforts during the last decade of the Qaddafi rule (Prashad, 2012, p. 148).

There are controversial views on how the regime reacted to the protesters. According to Human Rights Watch ((HRW), 2011a), the regime’s security forces

killed one protester and injured 14 others during a peaceful demonstration on the first day of the uprising. However, a report prepared by an independent delegation of experts on the initiative of the International Center for the Study and Research into Terrorism and Assistance to the Victims of Terrorism (CIRET-AVT) and the French Center for Intelligence Studies (CF2R), with the support of the Mediterranean Peace Forum, claimed just the opposite:

From the start of the demonstrations, Islamists and criminals took advantage of the situation by attacking the high security prisons on the outskirts of Benghazi where their friends were locked up. After freeing these men, the mob attacked the police stations and the official buildings, and the inhabitants of the town woke to see the bodies of police officers hanging by the neck from bridges. (...) During the first few days the efforts to regain control were carried out without using excessive force, subsequently the forces of law and order fired over the heads of the mob and on the next day shot at them (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p. 17).

As it is seen, the Libyan uprising was not a peaceful demonstration, contrary to what the HRW had claimed; therefore, the regime may have had a greater number of legitimate reasons to use force against the rebels. Moreover, HRW (2011b)'s argument that the regime in Libya did not allow journalists or human rights monitors to work freely was completely misleading, according to the delegation of experts. They argued that, "Al Jazeera was in Tripoli, its reporters, often Westerners, travelled without hindrance by the regime" (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p. 15).

Another clash between these two sources of information was related to events in the west of Libya. "West of Tripoli in Zawiyah city, government security forces firing on demonstrators are causing bloodshed and chaos. (...) Pro-Gaddafi thugs have terrorized Egyptian migrant workers, causing hundreds to flee to Tunisia"

(HRW, 2011c). Nonetheless, the delegation of experts, who listened to the other side of the conflict, came up with a different story. According to the police, the protesters were mostly Libyans, but included Tunisians and Egyptians, and as soon as they entered Zawiyah, they occupied the centre, taking civilians hostage. Surprisingly enough, during the first three weeks police were ordered not to do anything against the insurgents and had to evacuate their own buildings because of the attacks. They did not understand why they were not doing anything to regain the control of the city, which would later be explained by the defection of Interior Minister Abdul Fatah Younis. He had deliberately given orders not to do anything so that the uprising could grow stronger (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p.19). There were also claims by the international media that Qaddafi was firing on his own population and that he was carrying out air attacks in Tripoli (Abrahams, 2011), information again denied by the delegation of experts.

Until the end of February the towns of the West of Libya had encountered strong tensions and some attacks- those were less in the East- but these events were subject to exaggeration and disinformation pure and simple. For example the international media broadcast claims that the regime air force has bombed Tripoli, which is wrong; no Libyan bomb fell on the capital, even if some clashes took place in some areas on the ground (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p. 15).

In such an environment of information distortion propagated by the media, it is hard to tell what was really going on in Libya. To worsen matters, “UN Resolution 1973 was voted in, on the basis of this misinformation from the press, and without any commission of enquiry first investigating the facts. It is no exaggeration to say that

Al Jazeera created the ‘event’ that influenced the UN” (CIRET-AVT & CF2R, 2011, p.15).

Qaddafi’s televised speech to Libyan people on 22 February threatening the protestors added to the tension when he said:

Get out of your homes, go out to the streets, secure the streets, seize the rats, do not be afraid of them. (...) I haven’t yet given the order to use bullets. When the order is given to use force, we will be ready. Then everything will be burned. (...) And I and the millions will march in order to cleanse Libya, inch by inch, house by house, home by home, alley by alley, individual by individual, so that the country is purified from the unclean (Phelan, 2011).

From then on, the crisis in Libya was portrayed as if Qaddafi forces were brutally massacring the protestors, and his speech was used as a pretext by the UK, US and France to intervene in the country (Prashad, 2012, p. 150). However, the crimes committed by the rebels, particularly targeting black Africans, who were all suspected to be working for Qaddafi, were ignored by the international community (Amnesty International, 2011). According to Vijay Prashad (2012), “[t]he emphasis was on Qaddafi’s human rights violations” (p. 159). However, that did not conceal the fact that NATO was an accomplice to the crimes against humanity as well. Horace Campbell (2013) wrote, based on the claims of two survivors,

the tragic story of a boat carrying 72 immigrants that ran into difficulty trying to reach the Italian port of Lampedusa. The Africans on board, including women and children, were left to drift in the Mediterranean for sixteen days after a number of European military units apparently ignored their cries for help. Two of the nine survivors claimed this included a NATO ship. Despite alarms being raised with the Italian coast guard and boat making a contact with a military helicopter and a warship, no rescue effort was attempted. In fact, facing the prospect of hundreds of African migrants leaving Libya, France and Italy sought to work with other members of the EU to block their departures. (...) Neither NATO nor the NTC was interested in the humanity of Africans (p. 137).

As early as February 26, the UNSC passed Resolution 1970, condemning the atrocities committed by the regime against Libyan people although “the real situation was still unclear” (Campbell, 2013, p. 68). The Resolution 1970 urged the Libyan government to:

- (a) Act with the utmost restraint, respect human rights and international humanitarian law, and allow immediate access for international human rights monitors;
- (b) Ensure the safety of all foreign nationals and their assets and facilitate the departure of those wishing to leave the country;
- (c) Ensure the safe passage of humanitarian and medical supplies, and humanitarian agencies and workers, into the country; and
- (d) Immediately lift restrictions on all forms of media (UNSC, 2011a).

Furthermore, it referred the crisis in Libya to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and imposed an “arms embargo” on the country as well as declared the names of the people subject to “travel ban” and “asset freeze”. Following Resolution 1970, the General-Assembly suspended Libya’s membership from the Human Rights Council on 1 March 2011 and it was the first time that “a sitting member was removed from the body” (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2011).

Meanwhile, the defections from the military and the arming of the civilian rebels with weapons looted from abandoned military barracks led to the evolution of the Libyan crisis from a protest against the regime to a civil war between anti-regime and pro-Qaddafi forces (Prashad, 2012, p. 152).

While the turmoil was unfolding in Libya, an interim government called the National Transitional Council (NTC) emerged on 27 February 2011 and was quickly recognized by France and Qatar, undermining Qaddafi's legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. The NTC was composed of "a small group of Libyans with deep intellectual and ideological affinity to the West," most of whom defected from the regime (Campbell, 2013, p. 256). "What united the thirty-one members of the NTC was the hatred of Qaddafi" (Prashad, 2012, p. 209).

Now that the new government was established and recognized by the international community, the next step was to topple Qaddafi. For that purpose, "no-one considered a peaceful path" (Prashad, 2012, p. 168). Even the Ad Hoc High Level Committee on Libya, established on 10 March 2011 by the African Union for the purpose of mediating between the opposition forces and Qaddafi, was prevented from doing so, as the French jets started bombing immediately on 19 March after Resolution 1973 adopted by the UNSC imposed a no-fly zone over Libya (Prashad, 2012, p. 168).

Apart from the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya, Resolution 1973 allowed the international community to "take all necessary measures (...) to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under the threat of attack" without deploying forces on the ground (UNSC, 2011 b). Although the Arab League supported the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya in the absence of its eleven members and despite two objections –Syria and Algeria (Campbell, 2013, p. 79), the African Union rejected the idea of "any foreign military intervention, whatever its form" and

called for an African solution to the crisis in Libya, which was later known as ‘roadmap’ and entailed:

(i) the immediate cessation of all hostilities, (ii) the cooperation of the competent Libyan authorities to facilitate the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations, (iii) the protection of foreign nationals, including the African migrants living in Libya, and (iv) the adoption and implementation of the political reforms necessary for the elimination of the causes of the current crisis (African Union Peace and Security Council [AUPSC], 2011, p. 1).

Finding the Arab League’s support sufficient enough for legitimacy, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1973 in spite of five abstentions, namely Brazil, China, Germany, India and Russia. The reasons behind these abstentions revealed how divided the international community was on the question of military intervention though they all supported the legitimate claims of people suffering under a dictator.

Representative of Germany at the UNSC, Peter Wittig was concerned about “the likelihood of large-scale loss of life” and “a protracted military conflict that could draw in the wider region” (UNSC, 2011c). India abstained due to the lack of reliable information on the crisis in Libya and the ambiguity of “who was going to enforce the measures” (UNSC, 2011c). Maria Luiza Riberio Viotti, Representative of Brazil, abstained from voting because she believed that “the resolution contemplated measures that went beyond that call [the Arab League’s call for a no-fly zone]” and feared that the measures taken might aggravate the crisis in Libya, “causing more harm than good to the very same civilians we [the international community] are committed to protecting” (UNSC, 2011c). Russia expressed its concerns regarding “how it [Resolution 1973] would be enforced and by whom, and what the limits of

engagement would be” and pressed for a ceasefire, which was seen by Russia as “the best way to stop the loss of life” in Libya (UNSC, 2011c). Lastly, Security Council President, Li Baodong of China, speaking on behalf of his country, said that “the United Nations Charter must be respected and the current crisis must be ended through peaceful means” and added that “China was always against the use of force when those means [peaceful means] were not exhausted” (UNSC, 2011c).

Besides these reservations explained above, the military campaign starting with Resolution 1973 demonstrated confusion over its command although the French took the lead in bombing Libya first. On March 23, 2011, Germany withdrew its forces from the operation “over continued disagreement on who will lead the campaign (“Who’s in charge?”, 2011). All the more interesting, four out of eight NATO members taking part in the same military campaign each referred to their operations with different codenames: France ‘Operation Harmattan’, the UK ‘Operation Ellamy’, Canada ‘Operation Mobile’ and the US ‘Operation Odyssey Dawn’. When NATO took over the command on 31 March 2011, the operation in Libya was called ‘Operation Unified Protector’ from then on.

The NATO campaign over Libya, which lasted from March to August of 2011, was a massive one. It featured “twenty thousand sorties launched to erode the power-base of Qaddafi” (Prashad, 2012, p. 215). According to Mohammed Nuruzzaman (2013), “NATO acted as the air force of the anti-Gaddafi rebels and bombed the civilian population. It looked more like a NATO war against the Gaddafi government” (p. 65). They even targeted Qaddafi’s home, allegedly killing his son and three grandchildren (Borger, Traynor & MacAskill, 2011).



In April 2011, the African Union engaged again in starting the negotiations between the regime and the opposition after getting the permission from the United Nations. Nevertheless, Libyan rebels declined the roadmap of the Africans for a ceasefire between Qaddafi and the NTC, although the former had agreed to accept “in principle” (De Waal, 2013, p. 372). Backed by the NATO forces, the rebels did not feel a need to negotiate with the regime since they were confident that it would be “an easy victory” (Mezran, 2014, p. 321).

Nonetheless, “there was no provision for regime change in this resolution [Resolution 1973]” and NATO had already gone beyond the mandate of protecting civilians “after the third day of the bombing, when the tanks and air capabilities of the Libyan regime had been degraded” (Campbell, 2013, p. 71, 116).

As soon as the leaders of the military operation in Libya, namely France, the UK and US realized that “the bombing alone would not dislodge the Gaddafi regime”, they had made a secret plan “Operation Dawn Mermaid” to take Tripoli (Campbell, 2013, 147). According to the plan, the NTC contacted the various underground opposition groups and bribed supporters of the regime to get information on several crucial targets in order to facilitate the entrance of the rebels to the city (Nakhoul, 2011). NATO forces, on the other hand, particularly the UK and France and the US together with Qatar engaged in several covert affairs, ranging from collecting intelligence to air dropping arms and deploying ground forces with an aim to topple Qaddafi (Nakhoul, 2011).

Soon after NATO's increased air bombardments on the crucial targets located earlier, on August 22, the rebel forces entered Tripoli and captured the city without much opposition from the loyalists (Erdbrink & Sly, 2011). Obama announced the end of the Qaddafi regime in a written statement from the White House on the same day:

Tonight, the momentum against the Qadhafi regime has reached a tipping point. Tripoli is slipping from the grasp of a tyrant. The Qadhafi regime is showing signs of collapsing. The people of Libya are showing that the universal pursuit of dignity and freedom is far stronger than the iron fist of a dictator (White House, 2011a).

At the time, nobody knew where Qaddafi was, although he made a radio announcement, saying "We cannot go back until the last drop of our blood. We will defend the city. I am here with you" (Erdbrink & Sly, 2011).

After Tripoli was taken by rebels, "the focus of the war turned to the capture of Gaddafi" (Campbell, 2013, p. 161). On October 20, Qaddafi's convoy was hit by a NATO air strike while he was fleeing from Sirte, his hometown (Farmer, 2011). After being captured by the rebels, he was lynched and murdered in a tragic way (Meikle, 2011). François Boyle (2013), advisor to Qaddafi in several international legal cases, "had predicted that Qaddafi would fight to the death for Libya and not flee his country in order to save his own life" (p. 14). Supporting Boyle's argument, it was later revealed by the head of Peoples' Guard, Mansour Dhao Ibrahim who survived the attack targeting the convoy that Qaddafi had spent his last days without water, electricity and on little food (HRW, 2012); however, he did not leave the country despite the hardships he went through.

The war on the side of NATO officially ended on 31 October 2011 and the Secretary- General of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen visited Tripoli on the last day of the operation, addressing a speech to Libyan people:

Libya is finally free. From Benghazi to Brega, from Misrata to the Nafusa mountains and Tripoli. Your courage, determination and sacrifice have transformed this country and helped change the region. (...) At midnight tonight, a successful chapter in NATO's history is coming to an end. But you have already started writing a new chapter in the history of Libya. A new Libya, based on freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and reconciliation” (NATO, 2011a).

However, in the end, the NATO operation could only pave the way for an endless civil war in the country, far from creating a new democratic and peaceful Libya. The country is now at the hands of armed militias formed locally during the civil war and they do not recognize central authority, causing clashes and conflicts among themselves as well as torturing and murdering suspected Qaddafi loyalists (Amnesty International, 2012, pp. 5-9). They had united under the hatred of Qaddafi, but when Qaddafi was killed, their differences came to the light (Barkawi, 2011). Furthermore, the militias consolidated their power “both by their role in the revolution and by the massive amounts of Qaddafi-era arms left unattended during the conflict” (Vandewalle, 2015, p. 21).

As Seumas Milne (2011) puts it plainly, “[i]f the Libyan war was about saving lives, it was a catastrophic failure” on the side of NATO. It did not protect civilians as dictated by the resolution, on the contrary, added to the number of casualties “while losing not a single soldier of its own” (Milne, 2011). Nevertheless, the true rebellion of people against a dictator in Libya should not be undermined due

to “the actions of US and EU imperial elements in wanting to abuse it” (Dabashi, 2012, p. 97).

### **3.3 Responsibility to Protect Doctrine in Libya**

#### **3.3.1 Emergence of Responsibility to Protect**

The term *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P) was first used in a report prepared by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2001 and it included three specific responsibilities in a comprehensive manner: “the responsibility to prevent,” “the responsibility to react” and “the responsibility to rebuild” (p. xi). Among others, prevention was emphasized as the most important responsibility by the commission, arguing that “prevention options should always be exhausted before intervention is contemplated, and more commitment and resources must be devoted to it” (ICISS, 2001, p. xi). A military intervention for humanitarian purposes was seen as a “last resort” and that decision could and should be taken in “extreme cases only” (ICISS, 2001, pp. xii, 31). On the basis of this report, the *2005 World Summit Outcome* document invoked the R2P as well, clarifying the extreme cases to be “genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” (UNGA, 2005, para. 138).

As is known, state sovereignty is protected under the principle of non-intervention by the UN Charter (art.2, para.7). However, according to the ICISS

report (2001), “sovereignty implies a dual responsibility: externally- to respect the sovereignty of other states and internally, to respect the dignity of and basic rights of all the people within the state” (p.8). Based on this concept of sovereignty, states become responsible to their populations, but if they are not able or willing to protect their people, then the international community should step in to protect them (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 58).

Moreover, R2P puts the peoples’ needs to the forefront; “whereas ‘humanitarian intervention’ privileges the perspectives, preferences and priorities of the intervening states” (Evans, Thakur & Pape, 2013, p. 202). Therefore, when it comes to the needs of innocent people vis-à-vis brutal governments, the international community feels compelled to respond though it is not a “legal obligation whatsoever” (Evans et al., 2013, p. 205). Accordingly, Ayça Çubukçu (2013) suggests that

the R2P reformulated military intervention as an *obligation*, in conscious contradistinction to a *right* of intervention. (...) while a right may or may not be exercised, the character of an obligation is different: It embodies a moral imperative to act, in this case, to perform the function of “protection,” if necessary with violence. (p. 45).

In 2009, the Secretary-General issued a report, *Implementing the responsibility to protect*, in which a three-pillar strategy was outlined: (1) “the protection responsibilities of the state”, (2) “international assistance and capacity building” and (3) “timely and decisive response”. In the report, firstly they affirmed that “[the] responsibility, (...) lies first and foremost with the state” by respecting the non-intervention principle of the United Nations (p. 9). Secondly, the international

community should help states in fulfilling their responsibilities towards their populations, and lastly if a state cannot or does not want to fulfill its obligations under the international law, the international community should “respond collectively in a timely and decisive manner,” taking into account all measures at their disposal from pacific to coercive ones (UNGA, 2009, p. 9).

After reading these three principal documents concerning R2P, Mahdavi (2015) clearly points out that,

In sum, the R2P doctrine, in theory, is an attempt to move away from a military humanitarianism towards a comprehensive, multidimensional and humanist approach to tackle structural and non-structural causes of violations of human rights before, during and after the crime (p.10).

### **3.3.2 Exercise of the Doctrine in Libyan Case**

The R2P doctrine offers a more humanist and comprehensive approach “to the old liberal discourse of humanitarian intervention” in theory (Mahdavi, 2015, p.8). However, when it comes to practice, the doctrine leaves its place to relations of power, which is clearly observed in the case of Libyan civil war.

First, the evidence of atrocities committed by the Qaddafi regime was ambiguous and not verifiable by the sources on the ground. Nevertheless, “*press reports* of excessive violence” were sufficient for the UNSC to issue Resolution 1973 establishing a no-fly zone over Libya (Prashad, 2012, p. 228). The credibility and lack of evidence on the crisis in Libya was criticized by Indian Representative Majeed Singh Puri at the UNSC as well while he was explaining the reason behind

his abstention (UNSC, 2011c) Therefore, “the just cause threshold” of the R2P, proposed by the ICISS report, was not met by the international community since the Libyan civil war was never an extreme case of genocide, ethnic cleansing or massacre (Prashad, 2012, p. 158).

Second, the military intervention in Libya was not seen as a case of last resort, and no peaceful resolution to the conflict was desired by the UK, France and the US since they “did everything to effectively sabotage the reconciliation process” initiated by the African Union to mediate between the regime and the NTC (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 64). Although “the responsibility to prevent” had been emphasized by the ICISS report as the utmost important responsibility, it was completely disregarded in the case of Libya. China and Russia, holding veto powers at the UNSC, preferred to abstain from voting, yet reminded the other members of the Council the option of peaceful settlement of disputes (UNSC, 2011c). However, “[a]t no time did the United States or the UN present a plan for a negotiated political settlement” (De Waal, 2013, p. 368).

Third, the NATO explicitly took side with the rebels in Libya, waging war against the Qaddafi regime (Prashad, 2012, p. 171) and breaching the arms embargo several times (UNSC, 2012, p. 16). Moreover, in April 2011, Obama, Cameron and Sarkozy (2011) wrote a joint op-ed, in which they underlined that, “Qaddafi must go and go for good.” Hence, the real objective seems to have been a regime change in Libya since the start of the crisis. Still, the doctrine “makes no explicit reference to the use of force as the first step in changing a regime or unseating a government that violates human rights or commit mass atrocities” (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 61).

Fourth, the double standard of the international community was back again in Libyan case, which “is consistent with the Security Council’s record of inconsistency” (Hehir, 2013, p. 157). While the NATO forces intervened in Libya by employing the R2P doctrine, they preferred to ignore brutalities of other dictatorial regimes against their populations, as in Bahrain and Yemen (Prashad, 2012, 89). As Mahdavi (2015) suggests, “geopolitics/*realpolitik* most often prevail over abstract norms/ethics in international politics” (p. 14).

Fifth, the UNSC, which was put forward by the ICISS report in 2001 as the right authority to implement R2P, proved to be a false idea in the Libyan case inasmuch as the decision of the intervention “is often determined by who has the means to intervene and the UN is hardly capable of overcoming the double-standard policy in using or not using force” (Mahdavi, 2015, p. 25). Often, the decision-making process of the Council is susceptible to “politicization” (Welsh, 2011, p. 3). Thus, the implementation of the R2P in the Libyan case was “damaged by gaps in expectation, communication, and accountability between those who mandated the operation and those who executed it” (Evans et al., 2013, p. 206).

Finally, apart from the responsibility to prevent, “[t]he responsibility to rebuild Libya in the post-intervention period was forgotten” (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 65). Now, Libya is suffering from tribal clashes and conflicts everyday but it continues to be ignored by the international community. There exists no long-term and credible strategy for rebuilding Libya in the near future (Wintour, 2016).



As is seen, “the Libyan campaign may indeed become an exemplar of the practice of R2P, but one that illustrates the limits of the doctrine, not its unalloyed success” (De Waal, 2013, p. 379). Andrew Garwood-Gowers (2013) summarizes these limits as “the absence of clear standards governing when and how the UNSC should respond”, the ambiguity of “the relationship between the means and ends of military intervention in humanitarian crisis” resulting in regime changes and lastly, the uncertainty of the threshold to decide whether a state is failing to protect its population or not. If these problems surrounding the doctrine cannot be solved, it will continue to be suspected of being “a new cover for Western neo-imperial domination and liberal warmongering” (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 65).

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The uprisings in eastern region of Libya took on a violent course very quickly, demonstrating the peoples’ repressed hatred for Qaddafi after years of negligence by the regime. Now people were fighting for true freedom and it was impossible to stop them since that was probably the only chance for them to overthrow Qaddafi.

Qaddafi’s Western-educated son, Saif al-Islam had already started the liberalization efforts during the last decade of his father’s rule, arguing that “Libyans want to eat McDonald’s hamburgers, not uranium” (Prashad, 2012, p. 123). As a matter of fact, he and his team of reformers sow the seeds of the rebellion by introducing people a new way of life that is completely different from the one under

the Qaddafi rule for over four decades. This idea was clearly strengthened when the top leaders of the regime defected to the rebels.

However, “militarized nature of the rebellion had transformed an uprising into a civil war” (Campbell, 2013, p. 67) and led to many casualties on both sides of the conflict. To worsen matters, encouraged by the UN mandate to protect civilians with “all necessary measures,” NATO intervened in the civil war and took side with the rebellion till the fall of Qaddafi regime.

NATO’s handling of the operations, exceeding the UN mandate, had serious results not only for the future of Libya, but also for the future of the R2P doctrine. First of all, NATO changed the fate of Libya by acting as the army of the rebels and removed the option of a ceasefire between the regime and the opposition. Furthermore, by breaching the arms embargo and deploying troops on the ground not just for the purpose of protecting civilians, but for toppling Qaddafi disappointed the members of the international community that gave the mandate to intervene in Libya. The Libyan case proved to us again that “noble principles are often convenient cloaks for hegemonic interests” (Thakur, 2013, p. 66). As for the R2P doctrine, the major responsibilities such as ‘the responsibility to prevent’ and ‘the responsibility to rebuild’ were forgotten by the NATO leaders during the rush in and out of Libya. Now Libya is suffering political instability and insecurity inasmuch as the security vacuum after Qaddafi’s death was filled by disorganized militias denying the central authority (Vandewalle, 2015, p. 21). Moreover, quick and easy victory by the rebels with NATO’s significant backing made it difficult for the former to unite under a central authority in the aftermath of the intervention, since the Libyan people could

not experience a revolution in its natural process. Foreign intervention in Libya whether intentionally or not curtailed the efforts of the Libyan people for a true revolution. Muhammad Ibn Ghalbun, an exiled opponent of Qaddafi, had predicted the future of Libya almost twenty years ago by suggesting that “were Qadhafi to fall, neither the exiled secular opposition nor internal Islamist activists would prevail; instead, a civil war between or among various tribal factions was likely to develop” (Anderson, 1995, p. 230).

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **FRANCE AND LIBYA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to explain how French national interests overshadowed the full dynamic of the Libyan peoples' attempt at a revolution. In this regard, it mostly deals with how and why France took the lead in the Libyan intervention in 2011. For that purpose, the first section gives a brief summary of the relations between France and Libya before 2011 starting from Qaddafi's accession to power in 1969. After touching upon the ups and downs of the relations between the two countries in the past, the second section describes the first reactions of France towards the Libyan government by taking the process to an international military campaign against Qaddafi in order to overthrow him in such a short period of time. Moreover, the willingness of France to lead the military intervention together with other members of the coalition, then the undesirable transfer of the command to NATO and French

intelligence and covert affairs in facilitating Qaddafi's fall are all explained in detail within the same section. Lastly, the chapter is concluded with the possible French motives behind the intervention and the implications of French action in this regard for the future of Libya.

#### **4.2 France and Libya before 2011**

When Qaddafi came to power in 1969, France immediately seized the opportunity of establishing good relations with the new regime by taking advantage of Qaddafi's antipathy towards Britain and the United States. In January 1970, the French government concluded a significant arms deal that would help alleviate the trade deficit with Libya due to the former's oil purchases (Arnold, 1996, p. 114). In the face of criticism, France claimed that the sale was conditional and the war planes could only be used for Libya's national defense, although Qaddafi did not seem to care about this restriction, saying that, "We are free to use our weapons which we buy and pay for" (Arnold, 1996, p. 115). Despite Qaddafi's harsh statements, France continued to deliver arms and war planes, trained the pilots who would fly the Mirage jets, and distanced itself from Israel in order not to undermine its relations with Libya (Arnold, 1996, pp. 115-116). In light of these developments between the two countries, Libya's Prime Minister Major Jallud, in 1974, visited Paris and he showed his interest in developing relations with France in the fields of nuclear technology, communications, maritime transport, banking and finance in return for

the assurance of long-term oil supplies for the latter (Arnold, 1996, pp. 116-117). Furthermore, during the same year, the French Elf-Aquitaine signed an agreement with LNOC and made a four-year commitment of exploration on land and offshore (Arnold, 1996, p. 117).

The breaking point in the cordial relations of Libya and France started with their involvement in Chadian civil war, the former siding with the Muslim insurgents in the north and the latter supporting the government in the south which had come to power after the colonial French authority departed the country in 1960 (Arnold, 1996, pp. 74, 118). Qaddafi's primary objective in Chad was to annex the Aozou Strip to Libyan territory, justifying it on the basis of a Franco-Italian agreement signed in 1936 (El-Khawas, 1986, p. 144). Despite several important disagreements, French-Libyan relations followed a stable course till the 1980s as both sides were dependent on each other and did not want to damage their economic relations. In 1977 Qaddafi even helped release the French ethnologist Françoise Claustre and her husband, who were held hostage by the rebels in Chad (Arnold, 1996, p. 118). Nevertheless, when it comes to the 1980s, French-Libyan relations started to take turn for the worst, mostly due to Libya's increasing involvement in Chad and its dramatic turn to the USSR for arms supplies (Arnold, 1996, p. 118), the volume of which reached to "some 15 to 20 billion dollars" (Harris, 1986, p. 97). With US support, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing even plotted to assassinate Qaddafi and he would have succeeded if he had not lost the elections in 1981 (Nmoma, 2009, p. 144). Moreover, the high influence of France over the French-speaking African countries also complicated Libya's future ambitions in Africa and

Qaddafi threatened to cut its aid to these countries if they continued to receive assistance from France (El-Khawas, 1986, p. 139).

Another important event that marked the relationship between France and Libya was the Gafsa incident in Tunisia, which was claimed to be provoked by Qaddafi in order to topple the Tunisian government in 1980 (Arnold, 1996, p. 119). When France sent troops to support the Tunisian government, the immediate retaliation from Libya came in the form of violence, with the burning down of the French Embassy in Tripoli and consulate in Benghazi “as a demonstration of Libyan outrage at French intervention” (Arnold, 1996, p. 119). Furthermore, the visit of the French President François Mitterrand to Israel added to the existing tension between the two countries in 1982 (Arnold, 1996, p. 119).

Two years later, in an attempt to moderate relations, Mitterrand negotiated with Qaddafi and both sides agreed to withdraw from Chad; however, Qaddafi did not keep his promise while France had already withdrawn its troops (El-Khawas, 1986, p. 146). Qaddafi’s failure to comply with the agreement embarrassed France before the eyes of the international community (Harris, 1986, p. 104). As a result, France continued to support the Chadian government more willingly together with the USA, and Libya suffered heavy losses in Chad, causing public resentment inside Libya (Arnold, 1996, pp. 76-77).

Despite worsening relations with Libya, France did not let the Reagan administration to use its airspace in order to bomb Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986 (St. John, 1987, p. 88). On the other hand, Qaddafi played a key role in freeing the five

hostages, three of whom were French, from the Palestinian Abu Nidal Group in Beirut (Ibrahim, 1990). Contrary to Britain, France was never eager to follow America's lead in its foreign policies (St. John, 1987, p. 89) and that was one of the reasons why Qaddafi could sustain the bilateral diplomatic and economic relations for such a long time.

Consequently, in 1988, Qaddafi started to take a more conciliatory approach towards the Chadian government and even offered a plan to reconstruct the war-damaged country (Arnold, 1996, p. 77). When the new regime came to power in Chad two years later, the relations improved immediately and the dispute over the Aozou Strip was submitted to the ICJ with the consent of the Qaddafi regime, which was weary of the war in Chad and the extending economic sanctions at the time (Arnold, 1996, pp. 77-78). In the end, the court ruled in favor of Chad in 1994 and Qaddafi accepted the decision without any opposition (Vandewalle, 2012, p. 179).

In the meantime, probably by conceding to the pressures, France had joined the Britain and the United States in implementing the multilateral sanctions against Libya in 1992 by accusing it of sponsoring terrorism. According to a French judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière, the 1989 bombing of the French UTA 772 flight over Niger in the Sahara was Libya's responsibility and he issued arrest warrants for four Libyans (Taylor, 1992, pp. 308-309). In 1994, France even arrested a Libyan citizen, Ali Omar Mansour "in connection with the UTA flight, but later released [him]" (Arnold, 1996, pp. 121). In order to initiate a constructive dialogue with France, Qaddafi himself wrote a letter addressed to the French President Jacques Chirac in 1996, offering cooperation for the investigation of the UTA incident (Terracini,



1999, para. 34). However, at the time of the incident in 1989, the prime suspect was Syria since the French involvement in Lebanon for the purpose of protecting Christians “against Syrian troops and Muslim militias” had nurtured enmity towards France (Tempest & Mann, 1989).

Whether Libya was really guilty or not, the US, the UK and France were always ready to blame it whenever possible. Hence, Qaddafi agreed to compensate the American and French victims of Lockerbie and UTA flight bombings in order to get the multilateral sanctions lifted as soon as possible. Nevertheless, France was not pleased with the amount of compensation since Libya had paid 10 million dollars for each Lockerbie victim whereas the UTA victims could only get 30 thousand dollars each at most “depending on their relationship to the dead” (Reynolds, 2003). Therefore, the French government insisted on getting more compensation by threatening to block the lifting of sanctions and Qaddafi agreed to give 1 million dollars for each victim in the end (Campbell, 2013, p. 102).

After the French President Nicolas Sarkozy came to power in 2007, relations between Libya and France took a better course. The President’s wife, first lady Cécilia Sarkozy, negotiated with Qaddafi for the release of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor, who were kept in jail since 1999 (Sciolino, 2007a) and condemned to death by the Libyan Supreme Court for deliberately infecting 426 children with HIV ( Rosenthal, 2007). The same year, Qaddafi paid his first visit to Paris after 34 years and did not forget to bring his Bedouin tent with him to the City of Lights (Anderson, 2007). During the visit, Sarkozy guaranteed the sale of 21

Airbus planes and establishment of a nuclear plant for civilian purposes in addition to some military purchases (“Gaddafi visit”, 2007).

Despite cordial relations between the two countries, when the uprisings broke out in Libya in 2011, Sarkozy was the first to intervene in the Libyan civil war against Qaddafi. As a reprisal, Qaddafi’s son Saif al-Islam claimed that Sarkozy’s 2007 electoral campaign had been financed by Libya:

Sarkozy must first give back the money he took from Libya to finance his electoral campaign. We funded it. We have all the details and are ready to reveal everything. The first thing we want this clown to do is to give the money back to the Libyan people. He was given the assistance so he could help them, but he has disappointed us. Give us back our money (Black & Willsher, 2011).

This particular allegation and many others regarding corruption and abuse of power surrounding Sarkozy (Willsher, 2014) probably led to his defeat to François Hollande in 2012 Presidential election.

### **4.3 French Position in Libyan Civil War**

#### **4.3.1 First Reactions from France**

The President of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, officially condemned the excessive use of force against civilians who just exercise their fundamental right to freedom of assembly and expression on 21 February 2011 (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs [FMFA], 2011a). A day later, a polemic erupted in France

concerning the disappearance of photos, taken during the visit of Qaddafi to Paris in 2007, from the website of the Elysée<sup>3</sup> (Piquard, 2011). The same situation applied to the website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is not possible to find any piece of information relevant to the relationship between France and Libya before February 2011. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that France's first reaction to the events in Libya was to forget its not-so-distant relations with Qaddafi.

Upon the announcement by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Michèle Alliot-Marie, the repatriation of French citizens started on 22 February 2011 (FMFA, 2011b). After that, Sarkozy demanded that his European partners impose concrete sanctions on Libya such as travel ban and surveillance of the economic transactions (FMFA, 2011c). The immediate involvement of France in the conflict against the regime in Libya without any prior investigation of the situation was really thought-provoking. However, it was obvious just from the start that Sarkozy wanted to be part of the game this time as he had skipped the chance of doing so in Tunisia by supporting "the Ben Ali regime in its policies of political repression" (Joffé, 2011, p. 513).

A phone call came from the President of the USA Barack Obama on 24 February 2011 and they both put into words their wish to stop humanitarian atrocities committed by the Qaddafi regime. On that occasion, Sarkozy expressed his intention to call for a new Security Council meeting so as to take concrete measures

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<sup>3</sup> Elysée refers to the Palace of the French Presidency.

concerning the human tragedy in Libya (FMFA, 2011d). Meanwhile, Alliot-Marie worked for the suspension of Libya's membership from the Human Rights Council (FMFA, 2011e). Moreover, on 26 February, it was declared that France closed its Embassy in Tripoli because of the worsening security conditions in Libya and the protection of French interests were handed over to the Embassy of the Russian Federation (FMFA, 2011f). Since the Russian embassy did not leave the country, either it did not feel threatened enough or France was trying to dramatize the situation and put more pressure on the international community by breaking diplomatic ties with the Qaddafi regime.

In fact, the real blow to the regime did not come from foreign countries. After Ibrahim Dabbashi, Libya's deputy ambassador to the UN, requested help from the international community concerning the continuing bloodshed in Libya and denounced Qaddafi on 21 February 2011 (Moynihan, 2011), the Libyan ambassador, Abdurrahman Shalgham, broke his silence and made an emotional speech to the Security Council four days later (Swaine, 2011). Shalgham did not only defect from the regime in his speech, but also his oldest friend, Qaddafi when he said:

I was one of his closest good friends, who worked with him from the beginning of the revolution, unfortunately we started the revolution with freedom, at the end of it you are killing our people (Swaine, 2011).

Now that the regime's diplomats defected, the Arab League, the African Union as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference condemned the Qaddafi regime and human rights organizations (without being on the ground) reported several human rights violations in Libya, and the Security Council unanimously adopted

Resolution 1970 (UNSC, 2011a) on 26 February 2011, which was appreciated very much by France (FMFA, 2011g). The resolution imposed several sanctions on Libya including an arms embargo, a travel ban and asset freeze. It referred the situation to the International Criminal Court and led to the creation of a New Sanctions Committee, which was just a new label for the UNSC. Lastly, member states were encouraged to make humanitarian assistance and France proudly became the first country to send two planes of humanitarian aid including doctors, nurses, logisticians and five tons of medical materials to Libya (FMFA, 2011h).

Meanwhile, a small armada, composed of the navies belonging to the USA, Britain, France, Greece, Turkey, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany, approached the Libyan coasts to demonstrate its superior naval force to the regime without the intention of engaging in military operations; rather, it was officially for the protection of their own citizens, most of whom already abandoned the country (Leymarie, 2011a). According to Philippe Leymarie (2011a), this naval presence may have helped the populations under repression to feel safer, become a means of pressure on the supporters of the regime and constitute a security belt preventing African immigrants from fleeing towards Europe. However, it was the first sign of an eventual military intervention in Libya, which was not put into words at that time.

On 1 March 2011, the UN suspended Libya's membership from the Human Rights Council for the first time in its history after a draft resolution was presented by Lebanon (FMFA, 2011i). While this decision was highly appreciated by France, the HRW (2011d) criticized it on the grounds of the hypocrisy, since there were

many countries that were continuing to commit crimes against humanity without any challenge by the same UN institutions.

As for the situation in Libya, there was definitely a refugee crisis, particularly concerning the African migrants who were vulnerable to attacks by the Libyan rebels since they all were thought to be working for Qaddafi as mercenaries (HRW, 2011e). This opinion increased the risk of racism against these workers. Although they formed the most vulnerable group in Libya now, the Europeans, especially France, was busy with evacuating Egyptians (FMFA, 2011j). Black Africans were not the first ones to be protected.

On 3 March 2011, France and UK in a joint declaration entered a new phase of engagement with Libya. It was declared that they agreed to impose a no-fly zone over Libya if deemed necessary and required the participation of states in the region to do the same (FMFA, 2011k). Contrary to the enthusiasm shown by France and the UK, the USA was hesitant in establishing a no-fly zone, thinking that would be counter-productive (Borger, 2011). Accordingly, the Arab League declared that they were against any foreign military intervention in principle, but they themselves with the help of the African Union might establish a no-fly zone over Libya despite lacking the capacity to do so (Leymarie, 2011b). Ten days later, the Arab League, contrary to what it said before, called the UNSC to impose a no-fly zone over Libya on 12 March 2011 (“Libya: Arab League calls...”, 2011). Even though the no-fly zone is reflected as a simple action, “it is equivalent to going into a frontal war with the Libyan regime” (Leymarie, 2011b). On 5 March 2011, the new French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé, made a phone conversation with Abdul-Fatah

Younis, former Interior Minister of the Qaddafi regime who had defected and thereafter worked as a member of the National Transitional Council (NTC) (FMFA, 2011l), which was declared to be the new provisional government of Libya by opponents of the regime, who defected from Qaddafi while holding important positions in government (Gritten, 2011). Younis welcomed the idea of no-fly zone over Libya since it was apparent that the insurgents would achieve nothing without foreign intervention. However, as Juppé said on several occasions, they needed two conditions for a no-fly zone: a UN mandate and the support of regional organizations (FMFA, 2011m). France did not think that a NATO intervention in Libya would be the right choice (FMFA, 2011n) inasmuch as it risked a misperception of the West among Muslim populations in the Middle East.

When it came to the NTC, France again was the first state to recognize its legitimacy. The Council was created by the opponents of the Qaddafi regime and held its first meeting on 5 March 2011 in Benghazi (NTC, 2011) and a day later France recognized it, declaring so on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FMFA, 2011o).

Fulfilling the first condition after getting support from the Arab League and the new provisional government of Libya, France, Britain and Lebanon drafted a new resolution to be adopted on 17 March 2011 in order to get a UN mandate to impose a no-fly zone over Libya (FMFA, 2011p). Resolution 1973 authorized member states “to take all necessary measures” for the protection of civilians and established a no-fly zone over Libya “for the protection of civilians as well as the safety of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and a decisive step for the cessation of hostilities

in Libya” (UNSC, 2011b). It also required the enforcement of the arms embargo, ban on flights and asset freeze which had been adopted in Resolution 1970. Further, it established a Panel of Experts responsible for analyzing the information and incidents of non-compliance.

Resolution 1973 was not adopted in unanimity as China and Russia abstained. According to Bruce D. Jones (2011, p. 54), these abstentions can be explained by two factors. Firstly, China and Russia give importance to regional organizations, so the call from the Arab League facilitated abstention instead of a veto. Secondly, the intensive US diplomacy within the UN created a kind of pressure on these two countries against a veto. However, the abstentions did not only come from the permanent members of the UNSC. Brazil, Germany and India also abstained from voting on Resolution 1973. India thought that sufficient mediation efforts were not carried out before resorting to the use of force; Brazil did not trust the American intentions in Libya and the German government was concerned about domestic politics and the coming elections (Jones, 2011, pp. 54-55).

Apart from the discussions related to abstentions, the resolution provoked heated debates concerning its scope of authority, which is open to several interpretations. Firstly, ‘the protection of civilians’ concept is not easy to define in the case of the Libyan fight because in Libya it meant the loss of neutrality and taking sides with the opposition (Zifcak, 2012, p. 88). Secondly, the aim of the resolution was not clear because the objective was not just to protect the civilians, but to change the course of the fight and help the rebels to win by toppling down the



regime (Leymarie, 2011c). Thirdly, the resolution prohibited any occupation force on the ground; nonetheless, Payandeh (2011, p. 386) argued that

the deployment of ground troops in order to gather information or to mark possible targets for air strikes is encompassed by the authorization. Furthermore, ground troops were allowed to be deployed to fight directly against Libyan troops, though they were prohibited to besiege Libyan territory.

Lastly, expiry of the authorization of the resolution was not set (Payandeh, 2011: 384) since it was not known when the Qaddafi regime would fall.

Soon after the adoption of Resolution 1973, Qaddafi declared a cease-fire. However, he did not stop killing the insurgents (Branigin, Sly, & Raghavan, 2011). Hence, on 19 March 2011, the operation in Libya was started by a mini coalition of states in which France, Britain and the USA participated as leaders. They were supported, to a lesser extent, by Canada, Denmark, Spain, Poland, Norway and Belgium. Italy let the coalition use its bases in the south. In addition, Lebanon, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan took part in the intervention in order to make this Western intervention look like an international one (Leymarie, 2011c).

#### **4.3.2 Operation Harmattan**

‘Operation Harmattan’ is the French codename of the military operation which started in Libya on 19 March 2011 in order to protect the Libyan population from the attacks of Qaddafi (French Ministry of Defense [FMD], 2011a). The decision to start the operation on the French side was taken by the President of the French Republic

after the Paris Summit which brought together all the interested parties to the conflict in Libya (FMFA, 2011q).

On the first day of the intervention, approximately twenty airplanes of the French air force engaged in imposing a no-fly zone over Libya together with allies of the coalition (FMD, 2011b). The symbolic honor of being the first country to fly over Benghazi was conferred to France. From then on, most of the essential air strikes were carried out by the Americans (Leymarie, 2011d). On 20 March 2011, just a day after the operation started, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, accused the coalition of exceeding the aim of civilian protection in Libya (Cody, 2011). Although France emphasized the support given by the Arab League at every opportunity, it was surprising to see that only Qatar joined the coalition in the bombing campaign in close cooperation with France against the forces of Qaddafi. According to the French General Jean-Paul Paloméros, the cooperation of Qatar was very important in demonstrating to the world that the coalition was working for the good of Libyan people (FMD, 2011c).

Though much praised by the French authorities, ‘Operation Harmattan’ was a short-lived one for France since the command of the operation was transferred to NATO on 31 March 2011 upon the insistence of the USA (Waterfield & Spillius, 2011).

When it comes to the ‘good’ behind the operation, according to the HRW (2011f), during the first few days of the conflict in Libya approximately 233 people were killed by the Qaddafi forces. However, it is not possible to find out the exact

numbers even now. It is predicted to be 30000 to 50000 dead in total by the new government in Libya and thousands of people are still missing (Nordland, 2011). Therefore, it is difficult to answer the question whether the intervention did any good or not, considering the damage people got. As for France, the intervention was definitely necessary because the French authorities believed that Libya would have become a blood bath if they had not stopped the Qaddafi forces (FMFA, 2011r, p. 6).

### **4.3.3 NATO's Intervention**

As soon as the operation started in Libya, the discussions about transferring the command to NATO grew stronger. The trigger was the desire of the USA to leave the job to NATO after the initial phase of the attacks in Libyan territory (Erlanger, 2011). However, France did not want the operation to be carried out under the auspices of NATO for its own reasons. First of all, NATO's involvement would require much more complex planning and systematic coordination of operations. Second, the US withdrawal would mean the transfer of the command from two centers of the operation, Mount Whitney and Stuttgart, to three: Naples, Izmir and Mons (Leymarie, 2011d). Therefore, it was hard for France to accept NATO's leading role in the operation considering that it would definitely limit the elbow room France enjoyed at that moment. On the French side, the strategic command of the operation was assured by the Center for Planning and Conducting Operations (CPCO) under the Ministry of Defense in Paris and the flights were coordinated by the Air Defense and Air Operations Command (CDAOA) in Lyon (Leymarie,

2011d). Hence, it can be said that France led Operation Harmattan in a relatively free environment without much intervention from outside, though agreeing that the leader of the operation was the USA (FMFA, 2011s, p. 6).

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé, held a press conference on 21 March 2011 in Brussels and answered a question concerning NATO's position within the operation. In his view, the operation in Libya could not be carried out under the flag of NATO without getting the consent of Arab states who did not wish NATO's presence (FMFA, 2011s, p. 5). Nonetheless, he thought the coalition could use NATO's capacities such as planning and coordination of operations, but without ceding political control to NATO (FMFA, 2011s, p. 2). In fact, France was very determined not to present the operation to the world as a Western one. On various occasions, Sarkozy and Juppé emphasized that the operation in Libya was being carried out under the auspices of the United Nations in order to fulfill the obligations of Resolution 1973 by a coalition of states both from the West and the Middle East.

In order to gain Arab approval for the participation of NATO after the withdrawal of the USA from the scene as the commander of the operation, France and the UK brought forward the idea of creating a new political leadership, later named 'Contact Group' (FMFA, 2011r, p. 7). That group held its first meeting on 29 March 2011 in London with the participation of intervening states, the United Nations, the Arab League, the Islamic Conference Organization, the European Union and NATO (FMFA, 2011t, p. 1) in the absence of the African Union (FMFA, 2011u: 3). The role of the Contact Group was to "provide a forum for coordinating the international response on Libya; and provide a focal point in the international

community for contact with the Libyan parties” (NATO, 2011b). After the meeting, Juppé and his British counterpart made separate declarations concerning the decisions taken by the Contact Group. Briefly, they stated that the participants of the meeting including the Arab states were pleased with the take-over of the operation by NATO. In addition, the participants agreed that Libya’s fate was in the hands of its own people and that they supported the territorial integrity of the country, fearing a possible partition between the supporters and opponents of the regime (FMFA, 2011t; 2011u). Therefore, while the military bulk of the operation was undertaken by NATO, the political responsibility stayed with the Contact Group.

On 31 March 2011, NATO took command of the operation in Libya and called it ‘Operation Unified Protector’ because the USA did not want to appear in the forefront of the operation anymore (Leymarie, 2011e). However, that was just a partial disengagement, as the USA would “play a supporting role - including intelligence, logistical support, search and rescue assistance, and capabilities to jam regime communications” (White House, 2011). Moreover, no serious change occurred regarding the command chain in the operation since the top American commanders participating in the operation continued to do their jobs as the commanders of NATO “wearing two hats” (Leymarie, 2011d).

#### **4.3.4 French Intelligence and Covert Activities**

France and other members of the coalition that carried out the operation in Libya were supposed to be neutral in the conflict and just do what Resolutions 1970 and

1973 allowed them to do. One of the most important rules that had to be followed strictly by the coalition partners and the UN member states was the arms embargo on Libya. However, that rule was broken in the first place even by the members of the coalition, let alone other states. As it is known, NATO was responsible for controlling the borders and coasts of Libya in case a breach of arms embargo occurred. According to the report of the UN Panel of Experts, NATO declared no such activity during its mission to the panel (UNSC, 2012, p. 16).

In the same report, the Panel of Experts stated that on 30 June 2011, “the [French] Permanent Mission informed the Secretary-General that France had airdropped self-defense weapons for the civilian populations that had been victims of attacks by Libyan armed forces” (UNSC, 2012, p. 21). This notification was a little late as it was already in the press on 28 June 2011 (Gelie, 2011). Besides France, Qatar and United Arab Emirates were reported to have provided arms to the insurgents in Libya. Qatar even accepted deploying its own forces on the ground (UNSC, 2012, pp. 23-25).

Thus, the question is why France and the others needed to arm the insurgents. A journalist in the journal *Le Monde* had quite credible opinions about this matter. He thought, first, that they might have wanted to hasten the fall of the Qaddafi regime by strengthening the opposition. Second, they might have feared an extension of the operation considering the power of Qaddafi’s forces. Third, these arms might compensate for the absence of the NATO troops on the ground (Leymarie, 2011e).

In addition to the breach of arms embargo, claims about French covert activities in Libya abounded. A French agent was alleged to have been tasked with killing Qaddafi on the orders of the President Nicholas Sarkozy in order to cover up the secret loans taken from the Libyan dictator for Sarkozy's 2007 election campaign (Allen, 2012). The interim Prime Minister of Libya at the time, Mahmoud Jibril, also claimed "It was a foreign agent who mixed with the revolutionary brigades to kill Gaddafi" (Allen, 2012), but he did not say anything about his nationality. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was also blamed by the Libyan rebel intelligence chief Rami el-Obeidi for cooperating with France in giving the key intelligence (Qaddafi's satellite phone number) and leading to the murder of Qaddafi so that France would alleviate international pressure on Assad (Blomfield, Squires, Samuel, & Sherlock, 2012). Nonetheless, a French intelligence expert, Eric Dénécé, denied all these allegations, arguing that "in November 2011 France's stance towards Syria actually toughened, with Paris being the first country to recognize the rebel Syrian National Council" and that Jibril and el-Obeidi were not credible since they were trying to get media attention ("Reports that French agent", 2012).

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

French involvement in Libyan civil war in 2011 was not a surprise. "France stood out as the state that has intervened and been involved militarily in Africa more often than any outside power" (Campbell, 2013, p. 95). On the other hand, Qaddafi, "the self-

proclaimed king of kings” in Africa (Dixon, 2011), had always confronted France in order to prove his supremacy over the continent.

Libya’s long-term rivalry with France in Africa, particularly in Chad, antagonized the latter and led to its isolation by the international community in 1992 with the imposition of the multilateral sanctions. However, in recent past, the Presidential term of Sarkozy marked the history of French-Libyan relations with Qaddafi’s first visit to Paris after 34 years. So, while France was enjoying the lucrative business deals with Qaddafi at the time, what was the reason or reasons behind Sarkozy’s sudden change of mind?

Firstly, “French oil companies had been left behind after Qaddafi opened up Libya’s petroleum sector to other Western firms” (Campbell, 2013, p. 98). Furthermore, after the lifting of the UN sanctions over the country, Qaddafi wanted to restore its relations with the USA by preferring American oil companies at the expense of French Total, “that had supported the country during the sanctions period” (Vandewalle, 2012, pp. 186-187). Therefore, Sarkozy probably thought that he could make better deals with the new Libyan government by supporting them from the very beginning. Yet, Sarkozy’s plan seemed not to be working when we look at the statistics. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2014), while France imported 10,2 million tons of oil from Libya in 2010 before the intervention, it could only buy 3,0 million tons in 2014. In fact, this drop of imports from Libya is the result of the low oil production in the country, which is going through political turmoil and violence after Qaddafi’s fall and not able to



prevent foreign oil companies from leaving the country for security reasons (Shah, 2015).

Secondly, as it is seen from the official statements by the French leader and his bureaucrats, the crisis in Libya was framed as if Qaddafi was massacring his own people without mercy and there was an urgent need of military intervention for humanitarian purposes. As is known to all, Qaddafi was never a zealous advocate of human rights and violated many of them, yet Sarkozy had invited him to Paris in 2007 and concluded several business deals regardless of sharp criticism even from his own government (Sciolino, 2007b).

Lastly, Sarkozy, in fact, let his secret agenda slip out on 25 February in 2011 during his state visit to Turkey, by declaring that “Mr.Qaddafi must go!” (FMFA, 2011v, p. 4). And this declaration came just 10 days after the first uprising in Benghazi, which was such a short period of time to understand and comprehend what exactly was going on in Libya. Therefore, it casts doubts on France whether the Libyan civil war was part of a French plot to topple down the four-decade Qaddafi regime in Libya.

## CHAPTER V:

### CONCLUSION

When Qaddafi came to power in 1969, he was a young military officer, aspiring to be a leader like Egypt's Nasser. He started a wave of nationalizations in the country, accusing the monarchy of being a puppet of the US. To garner support for his Revolution, he invoked the anti-colonial and nationalist feelings in the society by reminding them of their martyrs and sufferings under the Italian colonial rule. His rhetoric was partially successful and he gained a base of legitimacy for his regime.

In fact, Qaddafi's rule started to take on its unique features after he wrote his famous *Green Book*, creating a theory combining communism and Islam. The directives of the book had significant effects on the society, economy and governance, bringing all dimensions of life under state control though they were originally formulated to create a stateless society.

As is known, the economy of Libya was heavily dependent on oil and the regime was distributing the revenues to the Libyan people, creating a rare example of a welfare state in Africa. However, when the multilateral sanctions were imposed

upon the country, the ensuing economic problems caused resentment in the society, though far from being able to challenge the authority at that time. The liberalization attempts, pioneered by Qaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, in order to overcome the structural problems associated with the *Green Book*, further split the society as the regime favored its supporters on financial contracts, leaving almost no opportunity for the rest.

When the multilateral sanctions were lifted in 2003, a new generation of young people had already emerged, longing for career opportunities and freedom that were very limited in Libya. They were not able to understand Qaddafi's ideological ambitions or the anti-colonial legacies.

It was in this context that the uprising erupted in Benghazi, the eastern part of Libya neglected for many years. It quickly turned into a civil war after defections from the regime. The news media started to give misleading accounts of casualties in order to portray the crisis in Libya as genocide. Influenced by these press reports, the UNSC imposed a no-fly zone over Libya without making sufficient investigation and trying to find a peaceful solution first.

After NATO's interference in the Libyan civil war with the UN mandate to protect civilians without troops on the ground, the situation in Libya got out of hand. NATO took side with the rebels in the operation and aimed to topple the Qaddafi regime. Moreover, it breached the arms embargo, deployed troops on the ground, sent military advisors to the rebels for training and finally hit the Qaddafi's convoy fleeing from Sirte, paving the way for his murder. As is seen, NATO obviously exceeded the limits of the mandate. Apart from the violation of the mandate, NATO

led to more civilian casualties in Libya not only by targeting the civilian population directly, but also by ignoring the crimes of the rebels against the Qaddafi loyalists.

Originally, the mandate given by the UNSC Resolution 1973 had invoked the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine, which urges the international community to step in if a government fails to protect its population from the crimes against humanity. Furthermore, the doctrine encompasses three responsibilities: (1) ‘responsibility to prevent,’ (2) ‘responsibility to react’ and (3) ‘responsibility to rebuild.’

In the Libyan case, ‘responsibility to prevent’ was totally forgotten and even hampered by France and the UK, pushing the case towards ‘the responsibility to react’; in other words, military intervention. To worsen matters, the decision of the military intervention was taken without sufficient and credible information from the sources on the ground. After achieving the purpose of protecting civilians by destroying the military capacity of the regime, the mandate was stretched to topple Qaddafi, damaging the spirit of the doctrine. The ‘responsibility to rebuild’ Libya after the intervention, on the other hand, was never thought while busy with signing oil contracts with the new government.

It was even more interesting to see the willingness of France to intervene in Libya after witnessing their rapprochement with Qaddafi’s sensational visit to Paris in 2007, not long ago. According to allegations of Saif al-Islam, Qaddafi even sponsored Sarkozy’s election campaign. Therefore, it was really challenging to understand Sarkozy’s move in that regard. Moreover, it could not be explained by the international pressure on France to intervene because he was pressing himself the whole international community for a military action in Libya. As a matter of fact, the reason behind the French lead in the intervention was the desire for more lucrative

oil deals with the new Libyan government since France had been left behind the other Western firms after the lifting of multilateral sanctions. Now that was a great opportunity that lied ahead of France to make a new start in Libya and get rid of the erratic Qaddafi. These French national interests hampered the efforts of the Libyan people to bring about a true revolution, with the Libyan case proving again that “noble principles are convenient cloaks for hegemonic interests” (Thakur, 2013, p. 66).

In conclusion, Libya serves as a unique case in which revolution and foreign intervention occurred simultaneously. However, due to neoliberal ambitions of the great powers, the efforts of Libyan people to achieve a real revolution were curtailed and the uprising could not follow its more logical course of development. Now Qaddafi’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriyya, after his tragic death, remains in a state of chaos where militias patrol the streets freely and show disdain for any central authority. As a result, the present situation bears little resemblance to what should have occurred in line with a more faithful and effective application of the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine. Furthermore, the NATO intervention in Libya, showing both the limits and excesses of R2P in practice, damaged the future applicability of the doctrine and has aroused suspicions about its use in different parts of the world, particularly in Syria (Nuruzzaman, 2013, p. 65-66).

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