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Deconstructing the Second Libyan Civil War

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ABSTRACT

Military and political instability in Libya has taken divergent shapes and forms since its eruption with the Arab Spring of 2011 posing grave security challenges in the country and threatening spill-over effects along all of Libya's borders. Ranked 23rd out of 178, in the Failed States Index, Libya has been divided between duelling governments since 2014. Libya remains entangled in a complex web of interests of militias, brigades, tribes and regions in what is called the Second Libyan Civil War. War-torn Libya has also become a proxy playground of the struggle for regional dominance with foreign interference reaching unprecedented levels. The war has given a jolt to the security framework with sustained skirmishes, uncontrolled migration and destabilization of the regional oil-economy. Despite multiple rounds of talks, warring sides largely remain indecisive to agree upon any compromise. Emerging out of the power vacuum left by Gaddhafi's fall, and strengthened by the historical development of Libyan society and its state, Libyan civil war awaits a long-lasting settlement between rival factions.

The following sections attempt to examine the ongoing Libyan conflict. Focusing on multifarious aspects of the conflict, the paper aims to analyse the changing dynamics and current position of the war. The paper also presents a critical take on the process of "internationalization" of the Libyan crisis and its repercussions. With hope of stability in Libya and adding on to existing peace efforts, the paper puts forward recommendatory conflict resolution mechanisms.

Keywords: Civil War, Internationalization, Arab Spring, Ethnic Conflict.

I. INTRODUCTION

(A) Hypothesis

Libya has become a proxy playground for international actors to push their own strategic and economic interests, making prospects of peace bleak.

(B) Research Questions

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The research attempts to address the following questions

- What reasons caused Libya to move from Arab Spring to a failed state?
- Why does Libya have two governments?
- What has been the nature and dynamics of the civil war in Libya?
- What role has the international community played in the conflict?
- Does the Libyan conflict have the potential to end any time soon?

II. CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

The origin of the continuing complex web of armed conflicts in Libya can be traced back to the Arab spring movement and NATO bombing campaign that toppled Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Ever since the country has become a battleground for competing claims of rival governments and has been reduced to the status of a failed state by civil war and foreign intervention.²

(A) Historical Background

Libya, a mostly desert and oil-rich country, gained independence from British colonial rule in 1951. Post-independence Libya witnessed a monarchical state structure under King Idris I who declared himself as the sovereign. Despite being politically independent, Libya being among a handful of the world poorest countries per capita, remained engaged in the trap of neo-colonialism as it was highly dependent on international aid.³ However, Libya hit a jackpot after the discovery of significant oil reserves in 1959. The discovery of oil reserves brought immense fortune to the Libyan government but it also sketched the downfall of the monarchical regime in Libya. The resentment among some factions began to build over the increased concentration of the nation's wealth in the hands of King Idris which paved the way for a military coup in 1969, by a group of young army officers led by Col. Muammar al-Gaddafi, who deposed the king and proclaimed Libya a republic.

When the long-standing authoritarian regimes of Egypt and Tunisia toppled in 2012 due to the pro-democracy uprisings of the Arab Spring, Libya could not escape from the ripple effect of the revolutionary movement. The 42 years of Gaddafi rule which is occasionally described as an “Orwellian nightmare” was overthrown during a violent war that marked Libya’s first civil

² Eriksson, Mikael, and Elias Bohman. *The Second Libyan Civil War Security Developments During 2016-2017*. The Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2018.

³ Winer, Jonathan M. *Origins Of The Libyan Conflict And Options For Its Resolution*. Middle East Institute, 2019.

war.⁴

After the fall of Gaddafi's regime, numerous contestants vied for control of governance, territory, money, and oil resources.⁵ While most Arab countries witnessed democratic stability after the Arab Spring Libya couldn't meet the same fate and since Gaddafi's downfall, Libya has remained in a state of civil strife with political and military divisions in what has come to be called the Second Libyan Civil War.

(B) Post-Gaddafi Libya

The end of the first civil war in Libya paved the way for Libya's descent into chaos with the beginning of the second civil war in 2014 and even after 8 years of turmoil peace remains elusive.⁶ Libya's multilayered crisis has been fuelled by the dismal state of national institutions. On 7 July 2012, Libyans held their first parliamentary elections since the end of the former regime which handed power over to the wholly elected General National Congress, which was then tasked with the formation of an interim government and the drafting of a new Libyan Constitution. However, Libya's post-revolutionary security institutions were fractured and gave impetus to the emergence of local structures of authorities based on regional and social divisions rendering the central government weak and ineffective to assert its authority.⁷

Long repressed under Gaddafi's rule, terrorist groups and armed militias who had gained access to armaments during the Libyan revolution exploited the fragile political situation and established bases in ungoverned areas for radicalization and organized crime.⁸ The ineffective transition of power and politically and militarily weak central government struggled to control the militias contributing to the continued lack of security. Attempts to build a democratic state after Gaddafi fell disintegrated into a new civil war between rival governments. At the forefront of the conflict in Libya remains the incompatibility between the Government of National Accord (GNA), led by UN recognised Prime Minister Fayeze al-Serraj in Tripoli and the House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk, under the influence of Chairman Aguila Saleh Issa and General Haftar.⁹

(C) Recent Developments

The latest phase of the war started in April 2019, when Haftar and his Libyan National Army sought to expand his control beyond Benghazi and Cyrenaica and take over Tripoli where the

⁴ Vandewalle, Dirk. "Opinion | The Many Qaddafis." *The New York Times*, 5 Feb. 2013.

⁵ Winer, Jonathan M. *Origins Of The Libyan Conflict And Options For Its Resolution*. Middle East Institute, 2019.

⁶ Asmar, Amir. "Prospects for Peace in Libya Are Bleak." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 12 Mar. 2020.

⁷ Musungayi, Candice. "Libyan Strife: From Armed Conflict to Political Battle." *EU Reporter*.

⁸ Weise, Zia. "The Libyan Conflict Explained." *Politico*.

⁹ Cook, Steven. "The Fight for Libya: What to Know." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 Apr. 2019.

U.N.-backed GNA is based.¹⁰ Haftar not only failed to take Tripoli, but eventually lost significant territory. Nonetheless, the GNA has not been able to defeat him either. After a year and a half of large casualties and refugee flows, representatives of GNA and LNA reached a ceasefire deal on October 23, 2020.

But with a ruptured economy, foreign involvement and two ineffective and minimally legitimate governments, Libya remains spiralled in continuing fight over control of the country's oil revenue fueling fundamentalist tendencies and east-west divisions. The country continues to suffer from significant displacement and is a home for organized crime and terrorism with ineffective state institutions and their inability to lift the country out of the ongoing chaos.

III. NATURE OF THE WAR

The civil war in Libya is a battle of control along tribal, regional, political, and even religious lines. The Libyan conflict is now defined by competing ideological and political interests and economic ambitions fueled by the country's vast oil resources. Due to multiple stakes involved in the war and repercussions beyond Libya, the civil war has an increasingly competitive geostrategic character. The Libyan war is premised on internal power tussle coupled with military and foreign policy issues and has transformed into a complex and controversial series of developments, where local political events have been strongly influenced and driven by exogenous factors.¹¹ The war is being carried using heavy military equipment and also involves technological warfare like air campaigns undertaken by fighters and drones supplied and largely operated by foreign actors

(A) Geographical Expanse

Libya, at the heart of the Mediterranean, the Maghreb, and as a door to sub-Saharan Africa is the epicentre of the Second Libyan Civil War. The main theatre of conflict is based in the capital city of Tripoli due to its strategic and territorial importance.

As Libyan statehood remains in flux the country has witnessed the emergence of numerous Areas of Limited Statehood where diverse international states and national coalitions of local actors compete to provide basic services and security.¹² With the Gulf and Europe as Libya's backyard and the transnational character of the conflict, instability, protracted violence and

¹⁰ "Explained: What Is the Historic Libya Ceasefire Agreement About?" *The Indian Express*, 2020.

¹¹ Pedde, Nicola. "The Libyan Conflict and Its Controversial Roots." *European View*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2017, pp. 93–102. *Crossref*.

¹² Bolling, Rojan. "Libya's Conflict: A Patchwork of Local Divisions and Regional Interests | The Broker." *The Broker*, 2015.

extremism have the potential to spread from Libya to the Sahel across North Africa to the Mediterranean which risks destabilizing the entire southern shore of the Mediterranean, fueling uncontrolled migratory flows and potential terrorist threats.¹³ The rising tensions between foreign actors supporting different camps threaten to escalate the civil war into a regional conflict. There are also suspicions that some of the jihadists, along with pro-Gaddafi forces, have moved out of Libya and have escalated insurgencies in countries like Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The recent attack in Sousse, Tunisia, where a Libyan-trained extremist killed 38 tourists is the latest example of the regional spread of shockwaves of the war.¹⁴

(B) Humanitarian Impact

As the Second Libyan Civil War enters its 8th-year, civilians in Libya continue to suffer from unprecedented bouts of violence, inhospitable living conditions, lack of economic opportunity and lack of human security. The ongoing conflict has opened the door to rampant terrorism, weapons proliferation and massive refugee outflows. With the involvement of numerous stakeholders each looking for benefits, the real cost of the conflict is exclusively being paid by the Libyan people. Having little access to food, healthcare, safe drinking water, shelter, jobs, education, an estimated 1.3 million people need humanitarian assistance in Libya and 226,000 people have been internally displaced.¹⁵ As for education, the UN Children's Fund states that in the first seven months of 2018, the civil war affected 489 schools, depriving 260,000 students of education.¹⁶

The deterioration of the security situation and the fuelling and prolonging of the conflict due to the external interference has given rise to one of the worst migrant crisis and after enduring unconscionable suffering in Libya, refugees and migrants risk their lives at sea seeking safety in Europe, only to be intercepted, transferred back to Libya and delivered to the same abuses they sought to escape.¹⁷ The spread of COVID-19 has worsened Libya's humanitarian crisis and more than half a million people need health care assistance as ravages of conflict coupled with COVID-19 exacerbate the suffering of Libya's people.

¹³ Winer, Jonathan M. *Origins Of The Libyan Conflict And Options For Its Resolution*. Middle East Institute, 2019.

¹⁴ Bolling, Rojan. "Libya's Conflict: A Patchwork of Local Divisions and Regional Interests | The Broker." *The Broker*, 2015.

¹⁵ Al Jazeera. "UN Envoy: Impact of Long Libya War on Civilians 'Incalculable.'" *Middle East News / Al Jazeera*, 18 Feb. 2020.

¹⁶ "UN in Libya." *UNSMIL*, 8 July 2020.

¹⁷ "Libya: New Evidence Shows Refugees and Migrants Trapped in Horrific Cycle of Abuses." *Amnesty International*, 24 Sept. 2020.

IV. ACTORS INVOLVED

As Libya remains engulfed in a cyclic pattern of violence and unstable peace numerous stakeholders and perpetrators of violence contribute to the breakdown of the state. Due to the involvement of multiple domestic actors including armed groups, “city-states” and tribal factions each competing for territorial, economic and political control and with foreign powers increasingly wading into the fray, stability remains a distant dream in Libya.

(A) Domestic Actors

Control of Libya is currently divided between two loosely-tied coalitions of non-state armed groups, with small pockets of non-allied armed groups in the north. The Islamist-led General National Congress is located in Tripoli, while the internationally recognized House of Representatives is in Tobruk. Additionally, armed groups continue to operate with impunity.

1. Government of National Accord

Based in the capital city of Tripoli, the GNA is led by Prime Minister Fayeze al-Serraj and controls parts of the country’s west. It was formed out of the Libyan Political Agreement, a United Nations-led initiative, signed on 17 December 2015. Although the GNA received recognition from the UN Security Council as the legitimate government of Libya, it struggles to consolidate its authority in both the eastern and western halves of the country.¹⁸

2. Libya National Army

Led by Khalifa Haftar, a former general under the Libyan National Army commands influence in Libya’s east. Since 2014, LNA has refused to accept the legitimacy of GNA and has carried out offensives to retake strategic towns near Tripoli from militias allied with the GNA based in the country’s capital.

3. House of Representatives

Belonging to the Haftar led camp, the House of Representatives is a legislature created in 2014 to govern until a constitution could be written. It like its ally has not recognised the legitimacy of GNA on the grounds of it being established by the international community and alleged Islamist sympathizers.¹⁹ Based in Tobruk in the far east of the country, HoR was declared illegal by the Tripoli-based Supreme Court.

4. Militant Groups

¹⁸ Allahoum, Ramy. “Libya’s War: Who Is Supporting Whom.” *Khalifa Haftar News / Al Jazeera*, 9 Jan. 2020.

¹⁹ McKernan, Bethan. “War in Libya: How Did It Start, Who Is Involved and What Happens Next?” *The Guardian*, 18 May 2020.

The instability in Libya and the resultant vacuum of power has been favourable for the local armed groups and Islamist militant pockets such as al-Qaeda, Ansar al-Sharia, and the self-proclaimed Islamic State to gain ground in Libya and establish their sphere of influence. These groups aim to establish Sharia law and influence political agenda²⁰. With Libya's future at critical crossroads, it is feared that these fundamentalist militias will continue to exploit the fragile political situation and play a critical role in influencing the dynamics of the conflict.

(B) Foreign Actors

Ever since the start of the carnage in Libya foreign states have time and again tried to manipulate the debilitated political environment to serve their geopolitical agendas by backing feuding factions and adding to the violence through financial, media, and military support.²¹ While a lot of foreign actors have concerns that the Libyan civil war could have a spill-over effect, leading to prolonged regional instability, others involvement is driven by the potential for a political and economic reward if Libyan allies gain control of the state. Major international players involved in the conflict are:

1. The United States

The US sees Libya as a European problem that is of little strategic significance to America. After 2011 Washington has adopted the policy of "leading from behind" and while it officially supports GNA's struggle against the LNA its position in Libya often remains confusing. On one hand, the US State Department condemned Haftar's push on Tripoli, but then President Trump also made a phone call to the renegade commander, praising him on "fighting terrorism".²² Remaining on the margins of the conflict the USA has interests in preventing the "Syrianization of Libya". To counter terrorism and avert Libyan politics from disrupting global oil markets and it has lead airstrikes and helped defeat ISIL fighters in the coastal city of Sirte in 2016. With the election of President Joe Biden in 2020, Libya's interior minister voiced hopes that the incoming US President will support efforts to achieve stability in his war-torn country.²³ Many commentators have also pointed out that the absence of American strongholds in Libya has over the years come to benefit external sponsors and non-state actors.

2. Russia

Russia is an influential player and Libya holds importance for Russia's expansionist tendencies

²⁰ Allahoum, Ramy. "Libya's War: Who Is Supporting Whom." *Khalifa Haftar News / Al Jazeera*, 9 Jan. 2020.

²¹ Robinson, Kali. "What's at Stake in Libya's War?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, 16 Jan. 2020.

²² Al Jazeera. "Libya Minister: 'Hopes Greatly Lifted' by Biden's Victory." *US Elections 2020 News / Al Jazeera*, 9 Jan. 2021.

²³ Fasanotti, Federica Saini. "The Biden Administration Inherits a Rapidly Deteriorating Libya."

in the energy market of the Mediterranean. The ongoing war in Libya has been advantageous for Russia's interest and Russia backs the HoR and LNA in the hope of securing oil and construction deals in Libya. Since 2014 Russia has been actively providing financial and military support to Haftar and its support also includes blocking UN condemnations of the LNA.²⁴

3. Turkey

Turkey's involvement in Libya, where it supports the GNA, stems from a desire for a greater presence in the region. Turkey's interest in Libya is economic since it has substantial investments in Libya which it hopes to secure and make profitable through its continued presence. Its unshrinking engrossment is also attributed to geostrategic reasons given that Ankara's moves in Libya are countermoves to the burgeoning ties among Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel.²⁵ Turkey not only provided drones and air defence systems to GNA but also lured Syrian militants with the promise of Turkish citizenship to fight alongside GNA in Libya.

4. Egypt

With a 1,100km-long desert border with Libya, Egypt's involvement in Libya through its support to Haftar results from concerns about regional security. Economic ambitions coupled with Haftar's and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's shared ideology of militarism as the only antidote to an existential Islamist threat give an impetus to Egypt's stakes in the war.²⁶ Egypt played a significant role in Operation Dignity launched in 2016 to expel extremist Islamic and Jihadist. Cairo continues to have a hand in worsening the conflict through arms shipments and airstrikes that give Haftar's forces a military advantage.

5. United Arab Emirates

The UAE has shown allegiance to Haftar to the extent of violating the UN Security Council's arms embargo to provide Haftar with military equipment.²⁷ UAE hopes to monetize Libya's vast energy resources and its leadership shares the same ideological plane with Haftar. Harnessing its vast and far-reaching communication channels, UAE has tried to ensure battlefield superiority to Haftar through pro-Haftar media propagandas to garner public support for his military advances and giving him a qualitative edge.

²⁴ Mezran, Karim, and Arturo Varvelli. *Foreign Actors in Libya's Crisis*. Le Edizioni, 2017.

²⁵ African Business. "Turkey Raises the Stakes in Libya." *African Business*, 9 Dec. 2020.

²⁶ Megerisi, Tarek. "Libya's Global Civil War." *ECFR*, 26 June 2019.

²⁷ Megerisi, Tarek. "Libya's Global Civil War." *ECFR*, 26 June 2019.

V. INTERNATIONALISATION OF WAR AND PROSPECTS OF PEACE

The war which was initially premised on local territorial and political ambitions has gained an international character with international actors being the underappreciated driver of conflict. The involvement of the foreign powers can be traced back to the Military involvement of NATO and members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which led to the downfall of the Libyan government in 2011.²⁸ With the end of Gaddafi's rule, many actors retracted while others deferred their exit in hope of leveraging the power vacuum. Prolonging their stay in Libya these powers since the onset of the Second Libyan Civil War have supplied finances and arms, ammunition and related technologies to the competing factions. The international actors have assumed greater prominence in the conflict over local Libyan proxies, via foreign mercenaries, foreign-piloted aircraft, diplomatic superiority and other forms of interference.

Speaking on the rising internalisation that has transformed the civil war into a protracted proxy war, Fathi Bashagha the country's Interior Minister said that the problem is only 20% Libyan and 80% is from the outside countries involved in Libya. Supporting their proxies in 2019 alone UAE carried out more than 900 airstrikes over the greater Tripoli area and Turkey responded to the UAE by deploying Bayraktar TB2 drones and several dozen Turkish officers to carry out roughly 250 strikes.²⁹ This provided an impetus to Russia to increase its involvement in Libya. The outside powers have been training Libyan fighters, implementing multilayered offensives and sabotaging political resolution.

This highlights that the race to push geopolitical and economic interests has encouraged warring factions to opt for a zero-sum military victory rather than a negotiated end. As a result, the potential for long-term peaceful alternatives seems bleak in Libya. Libyans have become pawns in a geopolitical game of chess as the war no longer remains about challenging autocratic vision or restoring order but seeks to serve cynical outside interests, which have little to do with ordinary Libyans.³⁰

Since the outset of the conflict peace efforts have been pursued by various international actors including the United Nations and the European Union. Several multilateral conferences have taken place like the 2015 Skhirat Agreement, the 2018 Palermo Conference, the 2018 Munich

²⁸ Wehrey/Misrata, Frederic Libya. "'Our Hearts Are Dead.' After 9 Years of Civil War, Libyans Are Tired of Being Pawns in a Geopolitical Game of Chess." *Time*, 12 Feb. 2020.

²⁹ Harchaoui, Jalel. "The Libyan Civil War Is About to Get Worse." *Foreign Policy*, 18 Mar. 2020.

³⁰ Wehrey/Misrata, Frederic Libya. "'Our Hearts Are Dead.' After 9 Years of Civil War, Libyans Are Tired of Being Pawns in a Geopolitical Game of Chess." *Time*, 12 Feb. 2020.

Security Conference, and the 2020 Berlin and Geneva Conference. While these attempts at peace have led to ceasefire and negotiations, they have failed to produce long-term and credible results because the foreign actors are concerned more with capitalising than stabilising the turmoil and have undermined mediation efforts. The recent Berlin Conference pushed for supporting a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis, with arms embargo at the forefront of the peace process. Yet reports to the UN indicate that eight countries had violated the embargo thus rendering the peace talks futile.

Hassan Salamé, head of the UNSMIL, proposed a three-point peace plan to the UNSC which remained unsuccessful largely because governments of countries involved in the Libyan conflict had failed to support the peace process.³¹ Similarly, the European Union has sought to mediate between the conflicting parties and establish an inclusive dialogue process with stakeholders to introduce a new government and presidency. However, these efforts have not moved beyond the planning stage and have proved ineffective in the face of the constant shift in power balance and the high propensity for violence.

Even after 10 years since the revolution, life in Libya remains the same or worse and the Libyan war awaits a peaceful end which is made difficult to achieve due to the heavy international interference in the civil war that is strengthening both sides of the conflict, leading to even more destruction in Libya.³²

The above assessment proves that by being active in conflict but disinterested in peace, foreign powers have delayed the coming of peace to Libya. None of the parties involved is serious about reaching a political settlement.³³ All these external actors prefer an unstable Libya. A Libya unified under a single government that may not be dependent on their support diminishes their influence and jeopardizes their physical presence there.³⁴ Libya has been suffering too much from foreign intervention and the assertion of belief in “no foreign intervention, Libyans can do it alone”³⁵ remains a dream unfulfilled. This has led Libya to remain a fractured land of strife and struggle thus proving the hypothesis that Libya has become a proxy playground for international actors to push their own strategic and economic interests, making prospects of

³¹ “Explained: What Is the Historic Libya Ceasefire Agreement About?” *The Indian Express*, 2020.

³² Kadioğlu, Uluç. “The Real Face of the Libyan Civil War and the Underlying Humanitarian Crisis.” *Harvard International Review*, 8 June 2020.

³³ Mehta, Ketan. “Active in Conflict, Disinterested in Peace: Foreign Powers Delay Truce in Libya.” *ORF*, 20 Jan. 2020.

³⁴ Fasanotti, Federica Saini. “The Biden Administration Inherits a Rapidly Deteriorating Libya.” *Brookings*, 19 Jan. 2021.

³⁵ Sengupta, Kim. “With Libya on the Brink of Another Civil War, Foreign Powers Are Already Jostling for the Spoils.” *The Independent*, 8 Apr. 2019

peace bleak.

VI. TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Unless swift action is taken to end the clashes, the Libyan civil war is destined to continue. This requires identifying potentials for conflict resolution in Libya and arriving at an implementable agreement. Despite the roadblocks, political transition, state-building and economic reconstruction in Libya promise to reduce the potential for violence. The paper attempts to put forward recommendatory conflict resolution mechanisms for strengthening prospects for peace in Libya.

1. Peacekeeping

In the background of heightened violence, bringing peace in Libya would have to start with comprehensive peacekeeping. Mentioned in the UN Charter, peacekeeping can be described as involving actions to prevent, contain, moderate or terminate hostilities by an organised multinational force deployed in the conflict area with the approval of the parties involved, or at least the consent of one party and the toleration of the other.³⁶ Peacekeeping in Libya should aim at disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed fighters to help avoid military confrontation between the warring groups.

2. Mediation

Once parties have agreed to engage in peacekeeping resolution dialogue through mediation should take place. Mediation is seen as the intervention of a skilled and impartial intermediary working to facilitate a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement between the disputing parties.³⁷ In the Second Libyan Civil War mediation by reputable and reliable national actors or trans-governmental agencies can help LNA and GNA to manage their differences. Mediation can help in identifying potential and common grounds for cooperation thus eliminating competition.³⁸ In Libya, mediators can facilitate discussions by offering disputing parties a considerable range of alternatives and by resolving underlying grievances. The parties can be assisted to move toward mutual understanding and win-win agreements like giving up arms against each other and working together to eliminate the Islamic terrorism in Libya.

3. Ceasefire and Negotiation

³⁶ Rupesinghe, Kumar. "Theories of Conflict Resolution and Their Applicability To Protracted Ethnic Conflicts." *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, vol. 18, no. 4, Oct. 1987, pp. 527–539.

³⁷ Rupesinghe, Kumar. "Theories of Conflict Resolution and Their Applicability To Protracted Ethnic Conflicts." *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, vol. 18, no. 4, Oct. 1987, pp. 527–539.

³⁸ Yılmaz, Muzaffer Ercan. "Peacebuilding In Libya." *International Journal on World Peace*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2012, pp. 45–57. *JSTOR*.

The resolution of war calls for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations between the protagonists aimed at transition to a post-Qaddafi, legitimate and representative government. A major loophole of previous such efforts has been that most of these talks have taken place between international actors and outside Libya. The lack of direct arbitrations between the two sides has fuelled distrust worsening the war. Stabilisation in Libya requires the focus of all domestic actors on formulating a broader strategy and vision for the country. The negotiations will help in redirecting the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of the actors engaged in conflict. The focus of the stakeholders should be on unifying the country, establishing a new constitution, instating a single legitimate government and establishment and strengthening of a party system, elections, media, and an independent judiciary to facilitate Libya's smooth transition to democracy.³⁹

4. Peacebuilding

To ensure long term peace and prevent any future bouts of violence, Libya must go through an intensive peacebuilding program. As a post-conflict activity, peacebuilding identifies and supports structures that strengthen and solidify normalcy by curbing prospects of relapsing into conflict.⁴⁰ To avoid relapse to the civil war, Libya requires the adoption of strategies for addressing militarisation, non-amicable intergroup relations, and the proliferation of instruments of war in society. This requires collaboration between governmental, transnational and non-state actors to coordinate peacebuilding efforts at all levels. Peacebuilding in Libya should aim at building local economies and improving livelihoods. Since lack of justice and accountability in Libya was one of the drivers of the revolution in 2011 and is a reason for the continued conflict across Libya, peacebuilding efforts should focus on bringing longer-term political reforms for establishing an accountable, representative and law-abiding regime.⁴¹

5. Dealing with Internationalisation of War

The relatively low costs incurred by the external actors in supporting proxies has provided an impetus to them to continue the conflict.⁴² In this context, the de-escalation of war in Libya necessitates an immediate stoppage on international backing to the political ambitions of the military commanders. Instead of providing military and financial support for the war, the

³⁹ El-katiri, Mohammed. *State-building Challenges In A Post-revolution Libya*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2012.

⁴⁰ Rupesinghe, Kumar. "Theories of Conflict Resolution and Their Applicability To Protracted Ethnic Conflicts." *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, vol. 18, no. 4, Oct. 1987, pp. 527–539.

⁴¹ Middle East and North Africa Programme. *International Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Libya*. The Chatham House, 2015.

⁴² El-katiri, Mohammed. *State-building Challenges In A Post-revolution Libya*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2012.

international actors must be asked by the United Nations and other powerful groups of countries to work together with the Libyan authorities to enhance their capabilities of providing for their security. The foreign actors should put their selfish interests aside and not treat Libya as a playground to fight their proxy battles. To compensate for the destabilization and deterioration their involvement has caused within Libya, foreign actors must play an active role in assisting in building state institutions and political processes. The international actors must also provide non-conditional resources to Libya for its economic reconstruction and counter-terrorism efforts.

Yet another way to neutralize the ill-effects of internationalisation of war is involving the people of Libya in peace efforts. Until now all significant peace negotiations have occurred outside Libya, under the direction of foreign governments which has failed to bring lasting peace. Effective conflict resolution of the civil war mandates the involvement of the Libyan people and their diverse interests. The unspoken trauma of years of marginalization and disenfranchisement has torn up the social fabric in Libya which provides fuel to the ongoing war. Therefore, it becomes imperative to bring civil society to the negotiation table to determine their future. Peace can only be achieved when the Libyans reconcile, compromise and prioritize collective security. The people must confront each other in a face-to-face encounter regarding the areas of issues producing mutual conflicts or problems. Given the general lack of trust, on the part of ordinary Libyan citizens and communities, in national institutions and national political processes, Libyan civil society organizations play an even more important role in promoting conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

VII. CONCLUSION

A hotbed of competing ideological and economic interests, Libya has been in turmoil due to the ongoing multi-sided, multi-year civil war. The last 10 years have overwhelmingly demonstrated that changing the government without reducing foreign interference is not a suitable way to end Libya's woes. As the Libyan conflict continues to intensify, escalation of the hostilities and deterioration of regional stability looms large.

Time is of the essence in the case of Libya and ending this prolonged conflict is long overdue. It is, thus, important that the actors involved in the Libyan conflict understand that they will need to come together to work towards sustainable stability which facilitates security cooperation, good governance, and inclusive economic and social development that offers hope to the war burdened country.

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3. African Business. "Turkey Raises the Stakes in Libya." *African Business*, 9 Dec. 2020.
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