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Islamic Extremism 2.0
Jan. 19. 2017

Light at the end of the tunnel: Libya
Final paper

State building is not a failed cause and Libya will be a crucial case study for the subject. Libya has all of Syria's multifaceted, religious, ethnic and political problems with clashing international interests, but on a significantly smaller scale, which provides hope for a solution. After the Arab Spring and the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, the people of Libya found themselves without anybody to rule the country, so it became prey to hundreds of militias. The core of the problem is the lack of a legitimate government and central authority to keep order and secure economic activities. The only way out of the disorder is through the de-escalation of the conflict and establishment of communication between the major militias with international help while helping the new unified government stand up on its feet.

Libya before the Arab Spring was the most developed African country thanks to its vast oil reserves controlled by the corrupt Gaddafi regime for four decades. The dictatorship was based on a divide and conquer strategy. Cities close to Gaddafi grew rich while others declined, rural lifestyle was supported, while the regime attacked the urban culture. Under Gaddafi, the judiciary system suffered from politicisation of appointments, rampant corruption and the use of extrajudicial means to target political opponents. This style of rule was appropriate for the 1970s when he came to power, but he did not account for the change in demographics since then. Now over 80% of the population lives in urban areas and the majority is highly educated, so there is no wonder they demanded reforms. Had Gaddafi

responded to these demands with openness, the violent rebellion that followed could have been easily avoided.

A civil war broke out, which was ended by the bloody overthrow of Gaddafi. However, it was followed by another civil war, where the many militias fought to fill the political vacuum that was created with the instant disappearance of the government. In short, this prolonged war did not lead anywhere, except utter destruction. Realizing this, a first interim government (GNC) was created with the United Nation's help, which the East did not accept. A second attempt created the second interim government (Government of National Agreement - GNA) sealed by the Libyan Political Agreement. The GNA enjoys some legitimacy in the West, with most militias accepting it to some extent. However, the GNA is extremely weak, is yet to prove its competence and has to fight the remains of the GNC. The GNA receives currently insignificant support from Turkey and Qatar. The issue lies within the Eastern province that is controlled by the National Libyan Army (NLA) led by General Haftar from Tobruk. They have more military power, control over large territories and most of the oil production. They are backed by Egypt and the UAE.

The above mentioned divide between the East and the West combined with the weakness of the GNA poses the biggest challenge. To solve the conflict, a strong, inclusive state has to be built on the rubbles of a dysfunctional one. In order to achieve this, Libya needs a new competent government apparatus, and needs to bring the militias and Haftar under one umbrella through a diplomatic process. The new regime has to provide security forces all around Libya, then needs to restart oil production to start to rebuild the economy. As of 2017, the current state is still not at the first step even after two years.

The GNA has to be strengthened with international support from Egypt, the UAE, Italy and France, as it is barely capable of launching a single attack against ISIS. Egypt and the UAE are already investing in the conflict in the form of providing weapons to Haftar with the intention of countering the spread of the Muslim Brotherhood influence among the GNA. These two countries have to understand that a prolonged conflict is where the Muslim Brotherhood gains supporters. They can provide a more constructive role by providing training to lawyers, judges, policemen, the new army and government apparatus. The UAE and Egypt has a functional public service system that Libyans can learn from, and share the same language with Libya, so locals can be directly taught by personnel from the other two Arab countries. Through this process, the international supporters can influence the direction of the new government more than by arming rebels.

Italy and France were Libya's most significant trade partners before 2010 and they are also the countries that suffer the most from the influx of refugees from the Sahel region through the ungoverned lands of the North African country. They should take up the role of peacekeeping, and making sure that the conflict does not escalate into fighting again. Considering the population of Libya (6 million) it would not require more than 10 thousand soldiers in potential conflict zones around the oil crescent and Tripoli, where anti GNA militias are present. The French already gained some experience in Mali fighting militias, and both French and Italian are popular foreign languages so communication wouldn't be too difficult.

Once the government gains momentum, it can start its own campaigns to win the support of its citizens. Similarly to how it happened in ISIS controlled territories, the GNA

has to increase police presence on the streets, provide judicial services, inforce law, increase media presence and bombard people with propaganda. Reconstruction has to be started right away potentially with capital from China, who actively seeks partnerships even in conflict-stricken regions. The Asian giant desperately needs to secure the steady flow of natural resources into its hungry economy. Repairing the oil extraction infrastructure and pipelines should be a priority to prevent going bankrupt and becoming a failed state. The steady cash inflow from oil sales solves the shortage on many import goods and affords the government to pay its civil servants and soldiers. The created jobs provide an alternative to militiamen, boost satisfaction among the population and further increase legitimacy.

The success of the GNA stands or falls whether they succeed to bring the militias and the NLA under one umbrella. Western militias never really fought for independence, so they would most likely join the GNA after it can flex its muscles and seems to be able to rule successfully (i.e. according to libyaprospect.com the Tuaregs officially stated this). The GNC is losing its base, so it could be easily brought down with a little force, but I would suggest to offer them a place in the new government to minimize the number of discontent people. The NLA poses the real threat, because Haftar's military position diminished his incentive to join the power sharing state. His confidence has to be destroyed and he needs to be coerced from several directions into accepting the new system.

The first blow should be a functional public sector in the West that questions the existence of the Tobruk government led by Haftar. The joint army of the GNA and the Western militias could challenge the military dominance of the NLA, but the international peacekeepers would always stand between the two parties to prevent escalation. The Central

Bank, and the National Oil Company (NOC) are crucial sources of money and remained neutral throughout the conflict by funding both sides. Oil has been a key issue in the conflict since that is the only source of wealth and therefore the main origin of legitimacy. Although, Haftar controls the oil production, he can only sell through the NOC, which the GNA can have a tight grip on, since it's based in Tripoli along with the Central Bank. Tobruk's version of the two could be destroyed through no international recognition and a continued ban on crude oil sales outside the NOC. Lastly, diverting Egyptian and UAE support from Tobruk to Tripoli as mentioned before should be the finishing move. These previous measures weaken the Eastern state in its legitimacy, finances, and military, leaving it with the option of slowly disappearing, fighting, or joining the government. The fact that Haftar has been willing to work with the GNA in the past as part of the House of Representatives (legislature in the GNA) suggests that he does not completely oppose the Tripoli state. Once his confidence in his capability to rule Libya fades, he would agree to surrender.

However, the final solution has to make sure that everybody feels like they have a piece of the pie. Inclusivity should be a top priority learning from the case of Egypt where two consecutive governments failed to include the opposition in the democratic process and were as a result overthrown. The new interim government in Libya and later the elected one has to take into account that it can't just take control over every province. It has to provide sovereignty to each to satisfy their demand of self-governance. A strong decentralized authority should be the ultimate goal. On the other hand, influential Islamist preachers are already painting the new regime as religiously illegitimate because, they say, it was appointed by non-Muslims. Islamists have to be accounted for in the process, as well. This is why for example the incoming government's lineup should not be announced by the UN envoy, as it

was in October, but by Libyan negotiators themselves. We can discover these grievances if the political actors start a facilitated dialogue on the issues of importance to them. Topics such as the role of the NLA and the chain of command in the new state has to be clarified as soon as possible.

There are many more security issues that need to be addressed in addition to the ones that are essential to secure power. The country would not survive another armed conflict, which calls for the disarmament of militias that could follow the recent Colombian example. A pressing problem is ISIS gaining a foothold in the North African country. Defeating it means not only eliminating it from its base in Sirte but preventing it from relocating elsewhere in Libya or neighboring states. Neither the Tripoli or the Tobruk government has the resources to do this, and will likely need support from international forces in the form of counterterrorism training.

The people of Libya have a chance to escape chaos and poverty, but that really depends on the first step. The new government desperately needs the resources and tools to express control over its people and legitimacy. This, however, cannot be accomplished without outside help. The success in Libya would show the West one more time that state building is not a lost cause and could be used as an example and guidance for Syria and Yemen.

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