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## From normalization of relations to war: United States-Libya relations 2001-2011

Kelly Gosa  
DePaul University, kellegosa@gmail.com

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**From Normalization of Relations to War: United States-Libya Relations 2001-2011**

A Thesis  
Presented in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

by  
Kelly L. Gosa

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International Studies Department  
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
DePaul University  
Chicago, IL

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In special memory of Abby Bowman and my cat Najila.

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Source: Worldofmaps.net (2012)

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

My primary research focus is on United States-Libya relations during the 2001-2011 timeframe and the impetus of the U.S. role in the 2011 intervention in the Libyan conflict. In other words, why did Libya become a target for U.S. military intervention during the Arab Spring, which resulted in the downfall of Mu'ammarr Qadhaffi's Regime, a U.S. ally since the post-9/11 era. This project gives particular attention to the impact of both 9/11 and the Arab Spring on U.S.-Libya relations since they embody significant turning points of contemporary U.S.-Libya affairs. In this study, I argue that the U.S. involvement in the international intervention in Libya was "over-determined," or having more than one determining factor, since both a humanitarian and strategic interest in backing the intervention existed. Additional research questions are if diplomatic and economic ties were normalized in 2006, why did the U.S. favor the Libyan rebels against the Libyan government? and what incentives led to the normalization of U.S.-Libya relations?

Over the past three decades, diplomatic relations between Libya and the U.S. have fluctuated dramatically between co-optation and active confrontation. The low point of U.S.-Libya relations, in the 1980s saw the severing of diplomatic relations between the two states under the Reagan Administration and Libya's corresponding international isolation. Libya subsequently endured various political and economic sanctions imposed by both the U.S. and the United Nations (U.N.) for two decades (1992-2004). This dynamic changed in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 (9/11) period when the two countries saw a rapprochement. Libya became an ally on the 'war on terror,' ended its nuclear

weapons program and ultimately restored its diplomatic relations with the U.S. in 2006. Five years later, in March of 2011, U.S.-Libya relations once again turned confrontational as the Libyan government's violent response to domestic protests during the Arab Spring provided pretext for an international military intervention.

As the events of the Arab Spring unfolded in Libya in February 2011, the Libyan government's forces met protestors with extreme vigor. The escalating violence in Libya prompted fear in the international community regarding a potential genocide in the main rebel-held city of Benghazi as well as other parts of eastern Libya by government forces. France and Britain were the first countries to request an international military intervention in Libya. Subsequently, the U.S. officially became a supporter of military action to the civil unrest. The U.S. became a key player in the intervention despite strong internal opposition to military engagement within the Obama Administration. The military intervention began with a U.N. mandated no-fly zone over Libya. The U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973 authorized further efforts to destabilize the Libyan government by not ruling out any means of protecting Libyan civilians.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>2</sup> military intervention in Libya raised serious questions regarding the true intentions of the participating countries. It has been argued that Libya's large oil reserves and natural gas deposits were the real incentives behind the UNSCR 1973. Moreover, Libya's proximity to Western Europe enables fast oil delivery to European states. Therefore, Libya's strategic location

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1973) Retrieved April 2011 from <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>2</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a military and political alliance that was founded in 1949 in order to address security concerns in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its members include 28 countries from Western Europe and North America.

is another enticement for powerful states to pursue greater political and economic influence in Libya. As a result, some observers insist that the humanitarian argument can be easily construed as a false pretense for intervening in Libya.

Although I argue that the U.S. support for the intervention in Libya was driven by both humanitarian concerns and geo-strategic incentives, a more in-depth historical examination of U.S.-Libya relations and the internal dynamics of Libya is required in order to better understand this fluctuating political relationship. The historical context provides insight on why Libya was an exception for U.S. foreign policy in terms of engaging in a military intervention in Libya's conflict during the Arab Spring. Since Libya is the only country that experienced a direct military intervention in support of the government's opposition during the Arab Spring, this analysis also raises important issues regarding the 'realpolitik'<sup>3</sup> incentives associated with the interference and ultimate regime change in Libya.

While the historical context provides critical information regarding US-Libya relations, International Relations paradigms offer important insight on the causes and incentives for hostility and reconciliation between the U.S. and Libya as well as on the international system in which the two states interact. Although this thesis focuses on the fluctuating US-Libya relations instead of theory, I briefly incorporate the theoretical lenses of neorealism, liberal internationalism and neo-Gramscian analysis in order to address important themes throughout this study. Neorealism and liberal internationalism offer important insight on the rationale for fluctuating U.S.-Libya relations and the debate regarding the U.S. role in the 2011 international intervention in Libya. An additional

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<sup>3</sup> The word 'realpolitik' refers to a policy of political realism or practical politics. Therefore, the term describes the politics of the real world rather than politics based on theoretical, moral, or idealistic concerns.



paradigm of IR critical theory, neo-Gramscian analysis, offers a critical perspective on U.S.-Libya relations, specifically regarding the global hegemon (U.S.) and the structural power of the international world order.

As the reconstruction of Libya progresses in the aftermath of the fall of the Qadhafi regime, it is crucial to understand both the history of U.S.-Libya relations and the context of U.S. participation in the intervention in Libya. The U.S.-Libya relationship has not unfolded without the influences of other actors. Therefore, the international community is also critical in the analysis of historical and contemporary U.S.-Libya relations. The power relations between states, transnational alliances and international organizations provide a broader understanding of the geopolitical environment in which U.S.-Libya relations have evolved and why the international intervention in Libya took place.

## **Methodology**

This paper approaches issues of U.S.-Libya hostility and diplomacy using qualitative research. This project's key literature base consists of primary and secondary sources. I reference such primary sources as politicians' speeches, statements, interviews, U.N. Security Council Resolutions, news reports, newspaper articles and international non-governmental organization reports. Secondary sources comprise the majority of the literature base and include numerous journal articles and books. A significant portion of this study focuses on the international intervention in Libya. I examine arguments of key U.S. government officials, proponents of and those opposed to

the 2011 intervention in Libya, along with arguments from key Libya scholars as well as writers, journalists, professionals and policy analysts.

### **Structure of the Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the project and its importance. It identifies my hypothesis and the research questions used to frame the study and support my argument. It includes chapter summaries that indicate the main themes and events studied in each chapter and their significance to my hypothesis.

The second chapter provides a historical background of Libya and U.S.-Libya relations to contextualize contemporary U.S.-Libya affairs and highlight important themes. The political and economic forces that shaped U.S.-Libya relations since Libya's independence in 1951 throughout the Clinton Administration (1993-2001) provide a strong foundation in order to grasp the fluctuating nature of U.S.-Libya relations. This chapter emphasizes the changes that occurred in U.S.-Libya relations during the Reagan and Clinton Administrations, as they are central to the problematic U.S.-Libya relationship. Also central to this study is a brief investigation of Libya's *infitah*<sup>4</sup>, or economic liberalization efforts and the political, economic and social realities facing the Libyan government.

In addition, chapter two provides an analysis of arguments made by scholars, key government officials, journalists and activists regarding U.S. motives for isolating Libya as a rogue state. This chapter discusses Libya's fundamental political reorientation with

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<sup>4</sup> An Arabic word meaning "openness", it was coined by former Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat to define his 'open door' policy, or restructuring of the Egyptian economy initiated after the 1973 October War. (Ghannan, Farha 1997.)

the U.S. and the beginning of the negotiation process initiated by Libya in the 1990s is examined along with the impact of Libya's alleged Lockerbie involvement on U.S.-Libya relations.

The third chapter investigates how the events of 9/11 provided an opportunity for Libya to become a U.S. ally in the 'war on terror'. Libya's support of the U.S. after 9/11 enabled Libya to fast-track the normalization process with the U.S. The backdrop of the U.S. invasions on Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) are taken into discussion, as they influenced relations between the two countries. Further examined in this chapter are the key political negotiations that took place under the George W. Bush Administration: The Lockerbie Settlement (2002), Libya's renunciation of its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program (2003) and the official announcement of normalization of relations with the U.S. (2006).

Chapter four focuses on the 2011 Arab Spring, the Libyan Revolution and the subsequent international military intervention. A brief overview of the economic and political underpinnings of the Arab Spring, specifically the Libyan Revolution, provide an understanding of the complex political and economic realities of the MENA<sup>5</sup> region. Following this synopsis, the growing opposition to the Qadhaffi Regime is revisited as it demonstrates the fragile nature of the Libyan government prior to the Arab Spring. As a result of historical patterns of U.S. interference in the MENA region, this chapter questions the motives behind the participation of the U.S. in the international intervention in Libya. U.S.-Libyan relations once again turned confrontational, and resulted in the demise of Qadhaffi's Regime. This chapter also examines how domestic, international,

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<sup>5</sup> The MENA countries include the countries between Morocco and Iran. The North African countries are referred to as Al Mahgreb (the west) and the countries of Egypt to Iran are known as Al-Mashreq (the east).

political and economic forces influenced U.S.-Libya relations and how resulting actions and policies framed the discourse supporting the U.S. involvement in the intervention.

Finally, this chapter probes why Libya is an exception in U.S. foreign policy towards the Arab Spring as it juxtaposes its support for other authoritarian governments in the MENA region. The humanitarian argument applied to the international intervention makes it critical to examine the incentives of various states and alliances in the Libyan intervention; the U.S., Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), who are key NATO AND GCC<sup>6</sup> members. These nations and the structural powers (transnational alliances and international organizations) they represent that influence the world order are essential to this study. The chapter concludes with the post-Qadhaffi violence in Libya and the colonial, social, economic and political reasons it ensued. The violence is addressed in order to illustrate the political and economic growing pains of the Libyan nation-state. The final chapter summarizes the study, reiterates my research questions, argument, discusses important theoretical paradigms that aid in the analysis of US-Libya relations and concludes with my study's findings.

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<sup>6</sup> The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981 in order to facilitate policy cohesion among its member states. GCC member states include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and the Republic of Yemen.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Literature Review*

#### **Libya: State Formation and Historical Context**

In the first half of the twentieth century, Libya endured myriad foreign invasions by Turkey, Italy, Germany, France and Britain.<sup>7</sup> Like many post-colonial nations of the Middle East and Africa, Libya emerged out of the WWI settlement, and was shaped by the British and French influence over the disjointed Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> Libya comprises the three formerly distinct regions of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan; which developed separately since the beginnings of recorded history in the Phoenician, Ptolemaic, Roman, Meccan and Ottoman eras.<sup>9</sup> Today, the country remains divided into the three provinces of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and the Fezzan. These distinct provinces have resulted in political, economic, social and religious fragmentation in Libya.

Libya's most violent years were those of the Italian colonial period that began in 1911, which provoked fierce and unrelenting resistance from the Libyans. Italy's reconquest of Libya began in 1922 and lasted until the end of World War II. In 1943, Libya came under the military administration of the British (Tripolitania and Cyrenaica) and the French (Fezzan). Britain and France ruled fragmented parts of Libya until the U.N. declared it an independent nation in 1951 and installed the monarchy of King Idris al Senussi. Libyan authorities have stated that the Italians killed approximately 750,000 Libyans during this time.<sup>10</sup> Libyans who were not murdered outright were subjected to

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<sup>7</sup> Simons, Geoff. 1996. *Libya: The Struggle for Survival*. New York: Saint Martin's Press. p. 141.

<sup>8</sup> Otman, Waniss & Karlberg, Erling. 2007. *The Libyan Economy: Economic Diversification and International Repositioning*. Scotland: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Simons. p. 122.

concentration camps, torture, racially abused, exploited as forced labor and reduced to poverty.<sup>11</sup>

The failed attempts at state building in Libya by the Ottomans, the Sanusiyya, the Tripoli Republic and the Italians resulted in kinship, or tribal, religious and familial relationships as a prominent determinant of the political relationships in government.<sup>12</sup> Over time, however, Libya's foreign invaders also contributed to the creation of a multi-ethnic country. Both Arab and non-Arab tribes comprise the ethnic makeup of Libyans. The non-Arab ethnicities include the Berbers, Tuareg and Tebu and those of Arab-Berber mixed blood. Tribal and regional identities are critical components of Libyan society since it is a multi-ethnic state that has relied on kinship for social and economic mobility and political access.

Geoff Simons' *Libya: The Struggle for Survival* (1993) bears an appropriate title for an in-depth study of Libya's history of foreign invasions and its problematic position in the world, both before and after independence. Its dependence on the U.S. and Western Europe, particularly Britain, challenged the monarchy's legitimacy with the Libyan people. As a result of the long history of colonial interferences in Libya, deep mistrust of colonial powers is still shared today among the majority of the population of Libya and the MENA region. Regardless of this mistrust, a decade after independence, Libya was the poorest nation state in the world<sup>13</sup> and deeply reliant on Western powers for training, weaponry and direct financial aid.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 1990. 'Tribe and State: Libyan Anomalies' in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*. Edited by Philip S. Khoury & Joseph Kostiner. Berkely and Los Angeles, University of California Press. p. 295

<sup>13</sup> Simons. p. 182.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 185

From 1945-1991, the Cold War dominated world politics. Conservative countries in the MENA aligned themselves with the U.S. while the revolutionary and nationalist states were aligned with the Soviet Union at various stages throughout the Cold War. After the discovery of oil in 1957, Libya's extreme dependence on the U.S. and Britain changed.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the 1960's, Libya no longer relied on U.S. aid as oil revenues increased.<sup>16</sup> The Monarchy of King Idris received rents for the U.S. military base at Wheelus Field and for the British military base at El Aden, but the development of Libya's hydrocarbon industry decreased the reliance on these payments.<sup>17</sup> Libya's advantageous geographical position and its proximity to key European and North American markets (particularly when compared to other Middle East oil producers) greatly aided in the development of its oil economy.<sup>18</sup> Libya's geo-strategic importance is further examined in Chapters three and four.

King Idris may have enjoyed close relations with the U.S., but domestic dissatisfaction with the Western-backed monarchy led to the bloodless coup d'état in September 1969. It was led by a group of young Libyan military officers led by Mu'ammar Al-Qadhafi, known as the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). Qadhafi was a product of the British run Royal Libyan Military Academy based in Benghazi and there is debate about the British and American knowledge and involvement in the 1969 coup.<sup>19</sup> In the early years after the coup, there were many signs that Washington was pleased with Qadhafi's authoritarian anti-communism and that the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) protection of both him and the RCC in general from

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 187.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 172.

other attempted coups.<sup>20</sup> Overt support from the CIA and clandestine support from former CIA agents turned arms dealers during this early period demonstrates how some within Washington believed that Qadhaffi could be used as an effective anti-communist tool in the MENA region.<sup>21</sup> If the British and American governments did in fact aid Qadhaffi to power, or simply let him rise to power and subsequently protect him, it is evident that they never expected what was to follow.

The original philosophy of the revolution called for the RCC to be a provisional authority until Libya merged with Egypt as part of a larger Arab state.<sup>22</sup> The RCC was comprised of 14 of Qadhaffi's fellow military officers of modest backgrounds. They were also sympathetic to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's plight in Egypt. Upon taking power, Qadhaffi and his newly formed government embarked on various political, economic and social projects in Libya. After the coup d'état, Libya's relations with the United States gradually became problematic. Qadhaffi, an admirer of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, supported pan-Arab nationalism and Islamic socialism as reactions to U.S. foreign policy in the region and capitalism. With the help of the RCC, Qadhaffi implemented his economic, social and political blueprint, the 'Third Universal Theory' described in his book, *The Green Book* (1975) that promotes Islamic socialism as the building block of a utopian society.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. pp. 322-323.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 324.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 210.



## United States-Libya Relations: The Reagan Era

U.S.-Libya relations during the Reagan era was defined by increasing confrontation and outright conflict. Four areas that define the deteriorating relations are oil, terrorism, regional influence and Soviet influence. In January 1981, CIA chief William Casey gave a presentation at the White House on reasserting American dominance across the world and the terrorist activity by Syria, Iran and Libya.<sup>23</sup> In addition, The Reagan Doctrine called for the support of terrorist (freedom fighters) that struggled to overthrow left-leaning governments, while freedom fighters (terrorists) attempting to overthrow a right-leaning government were to be stopped.<sup>24</sup> Essentially, this meant that the ideological beliefs of both the new Libyan government and the Reagan Administration were at odds.

After the 1969 coup that brought Qadhaffi to power, his revisionist government transformed Libya both economically and politically. However, the growing internal opposition in Libya and its internal relations with the U.S. slowly deteriorated. As Lisa Anderson notes, while imposing the revolutionary ideals, the new Libyan government was faced with internal opposition within the RCC that resulted in various coup attempts within the early years 1969 coup. Anderson argues that Qadhaffi's policies alienated both technocrats and religious leaders in Libya in 1975 and 1979, leading to many government defections and a growing support for exiled opposition groups.<sup>25</sup> The intent of the revolutionary ideology was to transcend the weak Libyan national identity,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 324.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 332.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 1986. 'Qadhafi and His Opposition'. in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Spring) p. 231.

however it failed among the majority of Libyans.<sup>26</sup> The nepotism that was cultivated during the monarchy, continued throughout the Qadhafi Regime though he declared his intention to eradicate in 1969. After various assassination attempts prompted Qadhafi to quickly utilize the benefits family and tribal ties could provide for security and thus strategically entrusted his family and tribe with the survival of his government.

As opposition grew in Libya, the seemingly never-ending oil wealth from the 1970s provided the revolutionary political and economic agendas. Their radical nature quickly caught the attention of Washington. In 1979, during the Jimmy Carter Administration, the Iranian Revolution and the Islamist takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca took place. In the same year, the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli was attacked. Wary of any threat to its influence abroad, the U.S. officially named Libya a state sponsor of terrorism and recalled its diplomats.<sup>27</sup>

The 1980s proved to be a particular troublesome decade for Libya. The drop in oil prices in the early 1980s resulted in the low oil revenues to the Libyan government. In addition, the domestic opposition in Libya during the 1980s left the government isolated within its own borders as numerous coup attempts resulted from increased political insularity as a result of the low oil revenues.<sup>28</sup> During this time, the Libyan government also supported the northern rebels (National Liberation Front) in the Chadian civil war and intervened militarily in the conflict between 1981-1987. Libya's support for leftist radical groups around the world in addition to its ties to the Soviet Union

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 1986. 'Religion and State in Libya: The Politics of Identity' in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 483, Religion and State: The Struggle for Legitimacy and Power (Jan.). p.61.

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 2006. 'Rogue Libya's Long Road' in *Middle East Information and Research Project*. No. 241, Iran: Looking Ahead. (Winter) p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 1986. p. 225.

troubled the Reagan Administration (1981-1989). The Reagan Administration vowed to take a harsher stance on terrorism and kidnapping than the previous administrations. Such events were prominent during this era, and because of unpopular U.S. government foreign policies, Americans were the targets of choice. As Americans were targeted around the world, the Reagan Administration wished to make an example out of Libya for funding terrorism. Mainstream American media was used to develop a negative campaign against Qadhafi that would generate public support for military strikes on Libya. This campaign of disinformation led to the 1981 resignation of Bernard Kalb, the State Department's spokesman and highly regarded journalist.<sup>29</sup> The U.S. shot down two Libyan fighter jets in the Strait of Sirte (1981) and bombed Tripoli and Benghazi (1986) in retaliation for Libya's funding of the 1986 bombing of the German discotheque, La Belle. The discotheque was frequented by U.S. servicemen, and, consequently the attack killed two Americans. After the terrorist attacks on Rome and Vienna airports on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1986<sup>30</sup>, Reagan ordered all American oil firms to leave Libya. These events punctuated the deterioration of relations between the two states. The response of the Reagan Administration was numerous political and economic actions intended to deliberately provoke a response from Qadhafi in order to legitimize large military strikes by the U.S. towards Libya.<sup>31</sup>

#### The 1988 bombing of Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland

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<sup>29</sup> Simons. p. 325.

<sup>30</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s Abu Nidal and his organization, Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) planned and carried out attacks in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. ANO enjoyed safe haven and support from several governments including Iraq, Libya and Syria. ANO claimed responsibility for the attacks on the Rome and Vienna airports in retaliation of the Israeli bombing of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) headquarters in Tunis on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985. The Libyan government was accused of funding the Rome and Vienna airport attacks.

<sup>31</sup> Zoubir, Yahia. 2002. 'Libya in US Foreign Policy: From Rouge State to Good Fellow?' in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (February) p. 33.

escalated Libya's tensions with the U.S. This event critically changed the U.S.-Libya relationship as well as Libya's rapport with the international community, particularly Western Europe. International issues of legality and legitimacy ensued for almost two decades that would impact all aspects of U.S.-Libya relations. The U.S. and Britain indicted the Libyan state in connection with the bombing and accused two Libyan suspects. As a result, the Libyan government was increasingly isolated and reassessed its place in the international system.

Simons' *Libya: The Struggle for Survival* (1993) provides an important insight into the Libyan government and U.S.-Libya relations during the Reagan Era. The main focus of the book is on the Lockerbie bombing in the context of Libya's colonial history and its problematic relationship with the U.S. and Western Europe after independence. Simons argues that the U.S. decision to target Libya for the Lockerbie bombing is driven by 'realpolitik' objectives of a hegemonic power that sets itself above international organizations and international law.<sup>32</sup> Simons argues that although Syrian, Iranian and Palestinian complicity in the Lockerbie bombing was agreed upon in the West, Libya was the 'fall guy'.<sup>33</sup> There are many theories as to who holds responsibility for the Lockerbie bombing, yet Simons stresses that the more credible explanation is that various individuals and the states of Iran, Syria, Libya, stateless Palestinians and even perhaps Jordan were involved in the organizing the bombing through a network of state terrorism.<sup>34</sup> However, the U.S. and Western Europe set the stage for the Lockerbie retribution to be directed at Libya.

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<sup>32</sup> Simons. p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

The theme of hegemonic power and its repercussions for Libya throughout the Reagan Era and early 1990s is examined in Simons' book. The author also argues that in 1991, the U.S. quickly claimed itself as victor of the Cold War and instead of promoting a new era of peace, it directed its efforts toward an 'agenda of punishment'.<sup>35</sup> With this in mind, Simons offers a detailed account of world events that contextualizes to U.S.-Libya relations. He demonstrates that throughout the 1990s, the situation for Libya worsened as the U.S. Congress enacted the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996, which ultimately imposed sanctions on international firms doing business with Libya and Iran.

The history of hostilities between the two nations is grounded in their conflicting interests and competition to influence Africa and the Middle East during the Cold War. The U.S. used military and economic power to spread and maintain its influence, whereas Libya relied on its oil revenues in order to fund revolutionary groups and challenge American power around the world. The hostilities grew more intense as a result of both states seeking vengeance. Robert Bruce St. John's *Libya and The United States: Two Centuries of Strife* (2002) captures this dynamic and depicts Washington's aggressive nature towards Tripoli. In this work, St. John claims that Qadhaffi became a 'symbolic surrogate' for more dangerous radicals in the world who were beyond Washington's reach.<sup>36</sup> The U.S.' inability to confront all presumed enemies, specifically terrorists, only further vilified the Libyan government and its leader.

From Washington's perspective, this problematic relationship was fueled by Libya's relationship with the Soviet Union, its alleged large financial support for extremist groups and the Lockerbie incident in 1988, and its desire to possess nuclear

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> St. John, Ronald Bruce. 2002. *Libya and the United States: Two Centuries of Strife*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 151.

weapons. From Tripoli's perspective, Libya is a small vulnerable oil-rich country in a world system, in which energy-hungry powerful nations dominate. Simons argues that NATO became an accomplice in Washington's Third World War on terrorism against poor countries.<sup>37</sup> According to Simons, all NATO member states would then be accomplices to this war and its effort to police the Third World in order to defend Western interests.<sup>38</sup>

In 'Rogue Libya's Long Road' (2006), Lisa Anderson argues that domestic policies in both the U.S. and Libya greatly shaped the U.S.-Libya relationship. The altered landscape of the post-Cold War era had already resulted in both governments pursuing policies that neither expected.<sup>39</sup> The Libyan leadership, for example was predominately concerned with regime survival, while the U.S. was concerned with maintaining its status as the lone superpower. Beginning in 1989, the Rogue States Doctrine<sup>40</sup> served as the foundation of U.S. foreign policy and as the nomenclature suggests, was perceived as a way of combating the expected military cuts by Congress following the anticipated fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup>

A similar foreign policy regarding Libya prevailed under George H. W. Bush as under Reagan. The adherence to the Rogue States Doctrine by both the Reagan and the first Bush Administration codified a pretext for the U.S. to repeatedly shun Libya's attempts at begin any serious diplomatic negotiations about normalizing relations. The

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 332.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp. 332-333.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson. 2006. p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> The term 'rogue state' was applied selectively to developing states that rejected U.S. hegemony and its support for Israel. Rogue states were punished with sanctions, threats of regime change and in some cases, actual military action. All of the rogue states are located in the Middle East except for Cuba and North Korea. With the exception of Iran (not Arab); Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria are all Arab and all are officially Islamic States.

<sup>41</sup> Zoubir. 2002. p. 33.

first Bush Administration was more cautious with Libya than the Reagan Administration as it was aware that Qadhaffi's hatred to Islamist fundamentalists could prove to be beneficial to U.S. interests.<sup>42</sup> In addition, U.S. officials worried that if Qadhaffi was removed, the lack of a clear Libyan successor would instigate chaos in a country where tribal affiliations were stronger than the political system.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, U.S. attention was focused more on Iraq and the events that culminated into its invasion of Kuwait.

The Persian Gulf War<sup>44</sup> demonstrated the hegemonic power of the U.S. and its unchallenged power in the Middle East. The awareness of the increased hegemonic threat in the region worried Libya. This fear, combined with internal economic and political pressures in Libya forced the Libyan government to reposition itself more favorably towards the U.S. and Western Europe in order to ensure regime survival. The growing domestic insecurity forced Tripoli to reconsider its international isolation in order to secure help (money and weapons) from the U.S. in its fight with insurgents.

### **United States-Libya Relations: The Clinton Era**

While the 1980s was a decade of confrontation for U.S.-Libya relations, the 1990s sidelined any development in Libya's oil industry. In the 1990s, oil prices increased, yet Libya was unable to purchase much needed technology and relied on outdated infrastructure that limited their ability to achieve the full financial potential of its oil reserves.<sup>45</sup> Obtaining the full financial potential of Libya's oil reserves was extremely

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<sup>42</sup> St. John. 2002. p. 165.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> The Persian Gulf War (August 1990 – February 1991) was waged by a United Nations authorized Coalition force from 34 nations led by the United States, against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

<sup>45</sup> Kawczynski. Daniel. 2010. *Seeking Gaddafi*. London: Dialogue. p. 167.

crucial to Libyan government's ability to remain in power. As a result of the worrisome economic situation in Libya, the 1990s signaled extensive economic reforms in Libya, the beginning of an era of negotiations with the U.S. and U.N. regarding their server sanctions targeting Libya. Regardless of party affiliation, Washington's tough stance towards Libya continued. In the 1990s, the international community, however, began to view the harsh U.S. foreign policy and sanctions against Libya as illegitimate. In 'Libya in US Foreign Policy: From Rouge State to Good Fellow?' (2002), Zahia Zoubir argues that as a result of the harsh foreign policy and military strikes on Libyan soil, many Libyans and citizens of the developing countries viewed Qadhaffi as a victim of U.S. bullying and hegemonic power.<sup>46</sup> Zoubir further argues that the irony of the Rogue States Doctrine and the punishments inflicted on Libya actually led to Qadhaffi enjoying a certain level of legitimacy that he would otherwise not have had in the eyes of most Libyans.<sup>47</sup>

Qadhaffi was hopeful that the 1992 American presidential campaign would yield a democratic president and change the direction of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>48</sup> Clinton won the election but was constrained in his ability to reorient his foreign policy, particularly toward rogue states such as Libya. The Libyan diplomats sent to negotiate with the Clinton Administration were full of hope in moving state relations forward, yet the Clinton Administration further ignored the Libyan diplomats and instead subjected Libya to harsher sanctions.<sup>49</sup> President Clinton's Administration was tougher on Libya than the

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<sup>46</sup> Zoubir. 2002. p. 33.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> St. John. 2002. p. 168.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 172.



previous administration of George H. Bush.<sup>50</sup> Both the Clinton Administration and the Republican-held Congress drove this tough stance. Although, Clinton did hope to engage Libya, but he had to do so carefully in order to avoid problems with the families of the Lockerbie victims.<sup>51</sup> During his presidential campaign, Clinton promised the families of the Lockerbie victims that he would tighten international sanctions on Libya.<sup>52</sup> Clinton kept his promise and toughened the international sanctions on Libya to ensure that the families of the Lockerbie incident were compensated and the Lockerbie suspects were surrendered.<sup>53</sup> Little support for Libya existed in the U.S., even among liberal politicians.<sup>54</sup> Various initiatives in Congress targeted Libya in addition to international firms doing business with Libya.<sup>55</sup> In addition, then Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, threatened Libya with a global oil embargo meant to cripple the Libyan economy that relied almost solely on its crude oil exports.<sup>56</sup>

Amidst Libya's international tribulations, the domestic economic and political situation in Libya was increasingly turbulent. Libya, like several MENA countries in the late 1990s was suffering from economic stagnation, and declining gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates.<sup>57</sup> The low oil prices of the 1990s were particularly problematic to Libya as it relied almost solely on oil revenues. In 'Political and Economic Developments in Libya in the 1990s' (1999), Mary Jane Deeb argues that the Libyan government faced

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<sup>50</sup> Zoubir. 2002. p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 45.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>55</sup> The United States Congress Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 targeted firms investing more than \$40,000 in order to block foreign investment in both nations. (U.S. Congress Congressional Record. House of Representatives. Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. 104<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess. 1996. H.R.3107.ENR. Sec. 5.)

<sup>56</sup> St. John. 2002. p. 171.

<sup>57</sup> Dahi, Omar S. 2011. 'Understanding the Political Economy of the Arab Revolts' in *Middle East Report*, 259.

armed opposition from myriad factions: its military, secular opposition organizations formed outside of Libya, Islamist Groups and tribal opposition<sup>58</sup>. The decline in economic growth and lowered living standards resulted in domestic instability. The Libyan military, alone planned numerous coup attempts, specifically in the 1990s.<sup>59</sup>

Eastern Libya was known for its Islamist opposition to Qadhafi's regime. The Libyan regime fueled further unrest by intentionally ignoring development needs of this region. Despite Libya's oil wealth, poverty and underdevelopment was rampant in eastern Libya.<sup>60</sup> As the result of regional Islamist uprisings in Libya in the 1980s and mid-1990s, the regime punished the city of Benghazi by blocking resources and infrastructure needs.<sup>61</sup> Accompanying the economic punishments by the regime was the continued widespread state violence. In 1996, a massacre of 1,300 prisoners at Tripoli's top security prison, Abu Salim, further antagonized the eastern population, as most of those murdered were from the region.

This turbulent atmosphere was further destabilized by the Libyan government's attempted economic reforms. Dirk Vandewalle's *Libya Since Independence: Oil and State-Building* (1998), focuses on the institutional aspects of state-building by distributive states with a specific focus on Libya. In response to the economic crisis induced by low oil revenues, the Libyan government began its *infitah*, marked by two phases of reforms. The first phase of 1987-1990s introduced self-management of cooperatives, whereas the second phase of the 1990s introduced more vigorous reforms meant to withdrawal the

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<sup>58</sup> Deeb, Mary Jane. 1999. 'Political and Economic Developments in Libya in the 1990s' in *North Africa Transition: State, Society, and Economic Transformation in the 1990s*. Edited by Yahia H. Zoubir. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. pp.79-82.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 79.

<sup>60</sup> Pargeter, Alison. 2009. 'Localism and Radicalization in North Africa: Local Factors and the Development of Political Islam in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya' in *International Affairs*, Volume 85, No. 5, p. 1036.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

state from the economy.<sup>62</sup> Vandewalle asserts that the second wave of reforms was politically dangerous for the regime as it impacted the social groups who benefited from their elite status via connections to the government and thus the basis of its support.<sup>63</sup> Although the emergence of a group of technocrats supported the reforms, Libya's *infatih* was never fully implemented as pressured by the regime's major clients who had the most to lose.<sup>64</sup> Vandewalle further argues that even if fully implemented, the *infatih* would have failed because Libya possessed neither the administrative, institutional capability or the genuine political will to implement and enforce measures that reversed policies meant to ensure regime survival instead of a functioning economy.<sup>65</sup>

The Libyan government could no longer ignore the necessity of implementing economic reforms and updating the aging infrastructure of its oil sector. Foreign investment was badly needed, for the oil sector's infrastructure update. Moreover, extensive oil and natural gas exploration had yet to be carried out in Libya. To this date, three quarters of the Libyan territory remain unexplored, and are believed to hold enormous oil and natural gas deposits, despite executives from international oil and gas companies ranking Libya as the top site in the world for exploration.<sup>66</sup> Libya's reliance on foreign expertise and technology in its oil industry had actually hindered the growth of Libya's oil industry. These trends provided an incentive for the regime to normalize its relations with the West.

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<sup>62</sup> Vandewalle, Dirk. 1998. *Libya since Independence: Oil and State Building*. London: IB Tauris & Co. Ltd. pp. 151-152.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 160.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 161.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Vandewalle, Dirk. 2006. *A History of Modern Libya*. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 174.

Further complicating the domestic situation in Libya during this decade were the U.S. and U.N. imposed sanctions as a result of the Lockerbie bombing. The U.N. imposed sanctions in 1992 and 1993, ultimately placed Libya under one of the most comprehensive embargoes ever imposed in the Middle East at that time.<sup>67</sup> The May 1993 U.N. sanctions that restricted air travel to Libya also made the delivery of spare parts for the oil industry virtually impossible.<sup>68</sup> The sanctions included an arms embargo and it froze Libyan government funds abroad and decreased the number of diplomats globally.<sup>69</sup> In the journal article, ‘The Strategic Use of Liberal Internationalism: Libya and the U.N. Sanctions 1992-2003’ (2005), Ian Hurd examines how Libya interpreted the norms of liberal internationalism in order to delegitimize the sanctions promoted by the U.S., Britain and France. Hurd asserts that both the U.S. and Britain were forced to choose between either upholding and maintaining the increasingly unpopular U.N. sanctions against Libya, or defending the legitimacy of the UNSC in the eyes of the world.<sup>70</sup> The U.S. and Britain eventually compromised in 1998 by lifting some of the sanctions in order to preserve the power legitimacy of the Security Council instead of maintaining a hard line against Libya.<sup>71</sup>

The growing domestic insecurity forced Tripoli to reconsider its international isolation in order to secure international help by way of money and weapons in its fight with insurgents. In April of 1999, Tripoli agreed to surrender the two Libyan Lockerbie

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<sup>67</sup> Zoubir. 2002. p. 35.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Hurd, Ian. 2005. ‘The Strategic Use of Liberal Internationalism: Libya and The UN Sanctions 1992 2003.’ in *International Organization*. Vol. 59, No. 3 (Summer) p. 509.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 496.

suspects for a trial under a Scottish Court in The Hague, Netherlands.<sup>72</sup> Although this was a political win for the U.S., its relationship with Libya continued to be worrisome. The continuation of Libya's WMD program was uncovered as Libya had been extremely involved in the Abdul Kadeer Khan (A.Q. Khan) network.<sup>73</sup> Libya was a recipient of materials from Khan's network from 1997-2004.<sup>74</sup> In addition, a financial settlement for the Lockerbie families remained unresolved. As a result, the Clinton Administration continued to be firm in respect to Libya. One of the last official acts performed by the Clinton Administration was the notification of Congress of the continuation of the state of emergency with Libya, originally declared in 1986.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, although the groundwork for improved relations had been laid, much work was left in order to officially improve and officially normalize U.S.-Libya relations.

Britain was a key leader and at times, intermediary in Libya's reorientation with the U.S. and Western Europe. Historically, as earlier discussed, it was partly responsible for the nascent Libyan state, installed its monarchy, and some argue that it even supported Qadhaffi's coup. Britain also shared a history of turbulent and violent relations with Libya. Britain's national interest in the workings of the Libyan government increased in the late 1972 when Qadhaffi met with senior members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)<sup>76</sup> Army Council<sup>77</sup>. Qadhaffi's arms shipments and monies to the

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<sup>72</sup> Takeyh, Ray 2001. 'The Rogue Who Came in from the Cold' in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3 (May-June), p.66.

<sup>73</sup> Laufer, Michael. 'A.Q Khan Nuclear Chronology' Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved April 26th, 2010 from [http://www.carnegieendowment.org/static/npp/Khan\\_Chronology.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/static/npp/Khan_Chronology.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> St. John. 2002. p. 190.

<sup>76</sup> The Irish Republican Army was established in November 1923 to end British rule in Northern Ireland. In 1969, a split in the IRA resulted in the Provisional IRA. The Provisional IRA began an insurgency or guerilla war against the British government.

<sup>77</sup> Kawczynski. p. 54.

IRA terrorized the British population for decades.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the Lockerbie bombing occurred on its soil. Negotiations between the British and Libyan governments allowed for the British government to obtain Libya's vital intelligence on the IRA<sup>79</sup> and settle the international Lockerbie legal disputes.

Although, much of Qadhafi's extreme rhetoric was directed towards Britain and the U.S., France also shared a deeply troubled history with Libya.<sup>80</sup> During the 1980s, France and Libya supported different factions in the war in Chad and in September 1989, the French flight UTA Flight 772 from Brazzaville, The Republic of Congo to Paris blew up in mid air, killing all aboard.<sup>81</sup> Libya's problematic relations with France are important to keep in mind. Further along in this study, it will aid in the explanation of France's role in the 2011 Libyan conflict.

It took years of negotiations and help from the British government for Libya to make slow rapprochement progress with the U.S. Owing to the changing domestic and international political environments, the Libyan government was forced to accept the international status quo in order to improve the probability of its survival. However, the Libyan government did defend itself against the U.S. and the international community by questioning the way in which the structural power of the world order both controlled and manipulated Libya. The Libyan government not only questioned the U.S. foreign policy incentives for the Rogue States Doctrine, but also helped to delegitimize the U.S. and U.N. sanctions against Libya in the eyes of the international community.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p. 169.

<sup>80</sup> Kawczynski. p. 40.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 41.

## CHAPTER 3

### United States-Libyan Relations Post-9/11: Qadhaffi as Terrorist Fighter

Alliances between states can increase the probability of survival; they also potentially increase political leverage with international institutions. Although Qadhaffi's core belief was that the Third World nations are victimized by powerful nations that use race to maintain their global hegemony,<sup>82</sup> he understood that his regime's survival was increasingly in peril. Libya was in a precarious situation. It had no real allies and therefore no real support from international institutions. In 2001, however, Libya was in a unique position to make an alliance with the U.S. 9/11 allowed many Arab regimes to join the 'war on terror' by suppressing domestic opposition by identifying them as terrorists.<sup>83</sup> After the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., the U.S. increased its economic, security and military ties with the central Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, and Libya.<sup>84</sup> Libya, like other North African governments was quick to integrate itself in the international war on terror and violently repress their citizens in the name of fighting terror.<sup>85</sup> In addition, Libya learned from Pakistan and Egypt that becoming an ally in the 'war on terror' was rewarded with less democratic reform rhetoric from Washington.<sup>86</sup> These actions of

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<sup>82</sup> Simons, pp. 263-264.

<sup>83</sup> Albrecht, H., Schlumberger, O. 2004. 'Waiting for Godot: Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East' in *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 4, p. 377.

<sup>84</sup> Zoubir, Yahia. 2006. 'America Policy in the Maghreb: The Conquest of a New Region.' *Area: Mediterranean & Arab World*. WP 13. (July). Retrieved May 15th 2010 from [http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano\\_engContentWCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano\\_in/zonas\\_in/mediterranean+arab+world/dt13-2006](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_engContentWCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/mediterranean+arab+world/dt13-2006)

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2006

<sup>86</sup> Toensing, Chris. 2008. "Libya's Fat Cat" in *The Middle East Report*. Retrieved February 19, 2010 from: [http://www.merip.org/newspaper\\_opeds/oped011108.html](http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/oped011108.html)

North African governments resulted in a heightened anti-Americanism in the region.<sup>87</sup> Of these countries, Libya stands out because of its historic tensions with the U.S. and the opportunity that the events of 9/11 created for improved relations with the U.S. After 9/11, the Libyan government quickly offered its cooperation with the U.S. in the ‘war on terror’.<sup>88</sup> Ironically, the terrorist elements that led to Libya’s international isolation became one of its negotiating tools. The nation’s intelligence on international terrorist networks allowed it to reinvent itself as an ally towards the West. Subsequently, the U.S. fast-tracked the normalization process.

Since Libya had a history of supporting terrorist groups on a global scale, the 9/11 terrorist attacks could have served as the justifiable pretext for a U.S. military attack on Libya. Hypothetically, Libya could have served as a safe haven and training grounds for Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden since Libya had a history of funding, arming and training terrorists.<sup>89</sup> However, Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden were considered a liability for the Libyan state. The mutual distrust and contempt shared by Washington and Tripoli for Al-Qaeda proved advantageous for the Libyan government.

Libya, was seemingly an easy target for U.S. military action in the wake of the terrorist attacks on NY and Washington D.C. These events, however, marked a dramatic phase in U.S.-Libya relations. Libyan cooperation with the U.S. in the war on terror was driven by the fact that Tripoli and Washington shared some of the same enemies, namely Islamist groups, most notably Al Qaeda.<sup>90</sup> A long-time target of Islamist militants, the

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<sup>87</sup>Zoubir. 2006.

<sup>88</sup> St. John, Bruce. 2004. ‘Libya Is Not Iraq: Preemptive Strikes, WMD and Diplomacy’ in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Summer) p. 393. Retrieved April 18th, 2010 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4330031>

<sup>89</sup> Simons. p. 283.

<sup>90</sup> St. John, Bruce. 2008. *Libya From Colony to Independence*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications. p. 243.



Libyan government was eager to share its knowledge of terrorist suspects and networks with the U.S. in exchange for the advancement of diplomatic negotiations.<sup>91</sup> Qadhaffi issued the first International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) warrants for Osama bin Laden back in 1998 after an alleged assassination attempt was made on his life by Bin Laden.<sup>92</sup>

The renewed U.S.-Libya relationship is an arrangement of convenience. The 9/11 attacks exposed the vulnerability of the U.S. as the global hegemonic power, and this provided an opening for Libya. It was in the interest of the U.S. security services to work with Libya in order to gain Libyan knowledge of terrorist networks and to have a greater presence in the 'war on terror' in North Africa.

Libya's vulnerability increased in the post-9/11 world. The two principal reasons for Libya's reorientation towards the West were Qadhaffi's fear of regime change (internal or external) and the economic losses endured by Libya as a result of the two decades of isolation. As 9/11 became the focus of the second Bush Administration, the new Bush doctrine of preventive war was articulated in the U.S. National Security Guidelines on September 20th, 2001. This document called for unlimited American military action regardless of international law or U.N. resolutions.<sup>93</sup> As George W. Bush propagated his goal to legitimize American military action against a government or terrorist group of choice, the Libyan government carefully positioned itself as a U.S. ally. Because of its history of support for terrorists, Qadhaffi's regime was an easy target for U.S. military action. The U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq impacted Libya's

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 394.

<sup>92</sup> Anderson. 2006. p. 42.

<sup>93</sup> Lynch, Marc. 2002. 'Using and Abusing the UN, Redux. in *Middle East Report*, 225. (Winter) Retrieved June 5th, 2010 from [http://www.merip.org/mer225/225\\_lynch.html](http://www.merip.org/mer225/225_lynch.html)

decisions concerning the U.S. demands on reaching a Lockerbie Settlement and ending its own WMD program. Moreover, the economic cost of isolation was great. The U.N. sanctions had cost Libya an estimated \$33 billion dollars in lost revenues from 1992 to 2001.<sup>94</sup> The threat of military strikes, a possible U.S. invasion of Libya and both the U.S. and U.N. sanctions served as key ‘tools of U.S. hegemony’ that were meant to destabilize the Libyan government.

### **The Lockerbie Settlement (2002) & Libya’s Weapons of Mass Destruction Program**

As the U.S. pursued its controversial ‘war on terror’, Tripoli was extremely wary of George W. Bush’s September 2002 National Security Strategy also known as the Bush Doctrine.<sup>95</sup> The Libyan government feared that Libya was a potential target for a U.S. invasion. As a result, the Libyan government eventually acquiesced to all U.S. demands to initiate normalized relations in order to avoid the risk of regime change and fully integrate in the international economy. The Lockerbie Settlement proved to be a critical political and symbolic step for U.S.-Libya relations. While Libya may have been coerced into this settlement, it simultaneously served as a means for its government to buy its way into the good graces of the U.S. and international community. On March 11, 2002 Libya accepted a verdict of responsibility for the Lockerbie and subsequently agreed to pay the families of the victims a total of 2.7 million.<sup>96</sup>

The settlement was seemingly a symbolic closure of a bitter economic and political history between both countries. Although, some observers argue that Libya was

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<sup>94</sup> Takeyh. 2001. p. 65.

<sup>95</sup> The ‘Bush Doctrine’ is a phrase used by politicians and pundits that describes U.S. foreign policy principles after 9/11. Four main points are preemptive military strikes, military primacy, new multilateralism and the spread of democracy.

<sup>96</sup> St. John. 2004.

able to manipulate the U.S. and other countries in order to influence the Lockerbie dispute,<sup>97</sup> it was clear that the Libyan government was acting in self-defense against the global hegemon and the unjust interstate system. Although Libya ultimately surrendered its Lockerbie suspects and complied with all U.N. and U.S. demands, some observers believe that Libya was the final winner in U.S.-Libya relations since it was able to maneuver normalized relations.<sup>98</sup>

Regardless of the Lockerbie Settlement, Libya's WMD program was still an obstacle for normalization. Regime survival was the motive for Libya's nuclear goals.<sup>99</sup> The nation's small geographical size and porous borders left Libya vulnerable to external intervention.<sup>100</sup> The natural desire of a sovereign state's self-protection is the right to develop deterrence capabilities and Qadhafi hoped to be the first Arab State to obtain a nuclear bomb.<sup>101</sup> His concern with Israel's nuclear weapons and the nuclear capabilities of western powers, such as the U.S., were named as justifications for Arabs to obtain their own nuclear weapons for nuclear deterrence in the region.<sup>102</sup>

On December 19, 2003 Libyan Foreign Minister, Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman Chalgham, announced Libya's official decision to be free of internationally banned weapons.<sup>103</sup> Based on U.S. and Western European intelligence, Libya had paid Khan over \$100 million for the transfer of nuclear technology and supplies.<sup>104</sup> While

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<sup>97</sup> Ronen, Yehudit. 2002. 'The Lockerbie Endgame: Qadhafi Slips the Noose', in *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. IX: No. 1. (Winter) pp. 53-59. Retrieved January 28th, 2010 from <http://www.meforum.org/138/the-lockerbie-endgame-qadhafi-slips-the-noose>

<sup>98</sup> Kaplan, Eben. 2007. 'How Libya Got Off the List' Council on Foreign Relations website. Retrieved April 26th, 2010 from <http://www.cfr.org/publication/10855/#p1>

<sup>99</sup> Bowen, Wyn Q. 2006. *Libya and Nuclear Proliferation*. New York: Routledge. p. 19.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> St. John. 2004. p. 397.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

intelligence and diplomacy were two of the real successful tools used by Washington to further shape the negotiations with Libya, the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq ultimately changed the political dynamic in ways that the decade of negotiations between Britain, Libya and the U.S. could not produce. This decision was the result of years of secret negotiations between Britain, Libya and the U.S. that ultimately led to Libya's nuclear disarmament.<sup>105</sup>

Despite Qadhafi's 42 years of rule, he failed to accomplish most of his ideological vision for Libya and his various unification attempts for North Africa, Africa and the Arab World. In fact, Qadhafi's goals became simpler after many ambitions failed. Qadhafi's enthusiasm about attaining the good graces of Washington is indicated in a speech delivered in 2002, on his thirty-third year anniversary of power: "We must comply with international legality even though it has been falsified and imposed by the United States, or we will be slaughtered."<sup>106</sup> Over time, Qadhafi's concerns with regaining oil wealth and regime survival trumped his ideological pursuits. Instead of meeting with guerilla leaders and terrorists, most of Qadhafi's visitors during the rapprochement period were future investment consultants and internet executives.<sup>107</sup> Qadhafi, by no means, changed many of his core ideological beliefs or altered his overall perception of the U.S., the West and the world order. Yet, the political climate had changed dramatically and being isolated by Western powers proved very costly and internally destabilizing for Libya.

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<sup>105</sup> Kawczynski. p. 183.

<sup>106</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 2006. 'Rogue Libya's Long Road' in *Middle East Report*. No. 241, Iran: Looking Ahead. (Winter) p. 46. Quoted in Zoubir, Yahia. 'The United States and Libya' p. 57.) \* I was unable to find this source, however Zoubir uses the same quote in (2002) 'American Policy in the Maghreb' WP 13 (July) p. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Takeyh. 2001. p. 66.

The economic structural changes within Libya and the entire MENA region actually instigated further instability in the region. By 2004, the IMF was urging for “significant acceleration of the pace of structural adjustment”,<sup>108</sup> or the removal of excess governmental controls to promote market competition and satisfy the neoliberal agenda of the World Bank. In Libya, the regimes’ response was two-fold and included further liberalization with the intent on attracting foreign direct investment from Europe, North Africa and China along with bilateral free trade agreements with the E.U. and U.S. through a massive privatization program.<sup>109</sup> Secondly, like Libya, numerous other MENA countries adopted the Bush Administration’s ‘global war on terror’ framework, which ultimately supported their internal repression of dissent.<sup>110</sup>

In March 2004, Tony Blair visited Qadhafi, the first British Prime Minister to visit Libya since 1969.<sup>111</sup> This meeting resulted in an agreement between the Libyan government to halt all terrorist funding in exchange for British help in extracting Libya’s oil reserves.<sup>112</sup> This meeting served as the official restoration of ties between Britain and Libya. As Britain and Libya officially renewed ties, formal relations between the U.S. and Libya renewed in 2006 with the exchange of diplomats.<sup>113</sup> Additional progress was made on May 15, 2007 when Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, reported that Libya has been removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism<sup>114</sup> for the first time since 1979. In January 2005, Libya awarded eleven out of fifteen onshore and offshore

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<sup>108</sup> Zoubir, Yahia H. 1999. *North Africa in Transition: State, Society, and Economic Transformation in the 1990s*. Edited by Yahia H. Zoubir. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Kawczynski. p. 162.

<sup>112</sup> Blitz, James and Saigol, Lisa. ‘Libya: No Line in the Sand’ in *Financial Times*, February 25, 2011. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/198e48b4-411a-11e0-bf62-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2DMK4AD59>

<sup>113</sup> Kaplan. 2007.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

exploration contracts to U.S. companies.<sup>115</sup> It was clear that the Libyan government wanted the U.S. companies to once again maintain an important role in the country's oil sector.<sup>116</sup> December 2008 formally marked the resumption of diplomatic relations with the arrival in Tripoli of Gene Cretz, U.S. Ambassador to Libya. The new U.S.-Libya alliance seemingly bolstered the Libyan government. It was expected, both in Libya and the international community, that Qadhaffi's son, Seif Al Islam, would take over Libya and further expand the economic reforms of liberalization and privatization with Prime Minister Shukri Ghanem. In 2006, Libya's continued inability to diversify its economy away from its oil and gas sectors resulted in the consistent burden of the state in providing services and jobs for Libyan citizens.<sup>117</sup> Reformers in the Libyan government, such as Ghanem had difficulty arguing for and implementing some of the necessary changes as a result of hardliners who disagreed with the neoliberal agenda.<sup>118</sup> The debates on economic reforms and their implementation worsened after the international financial crisis that began in 2007, yet the neoliberal reformers in Libya felt stymied.<sup>119</sup> In 2008, a prominent Tripoli attorney and friend of Ghanem explained to the Charges d'Affaires in the U.S. Embassy that the reformers believed that no shock-type therapy economic reforms would occur in Libya while Qadhaffi remained in power.<sup>120</sup>

Libya had gone from being a leading opponent of American hegemony in the region to an ally in the war on terror, and a status quo power. It had acquiesced, in neo-Gramscian terms, to the dictates of the international order. It no longer sought to subvert

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<sup>115</sup> Vandewalle. 2006. p. 186.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. p. 187.

<sup>117</sup> Otman, Waniss & Karlberg, Erling. p. 22.

<sup>118</sup> Prashad, Vijay. 2012. *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter*. Edinburgh: AK Press. p. 134.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p. 145.

the neo-liberal economic system, but, rather, hoped to use it to work with it in order to ensure its survival from both internal enemies and the threat of external invasion. Libya, therefore, approached its historic shift with the U.S. in terms of a realist perspective and sought to maneuver itself as best it could to ensure regime survival. The Lockerbie Settlement and renunciation of its WMD program were strategic moves used by the Libyan government in order to negotiate the best scenario possible for the its survival.

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Arab Spring and its Impact on United States-Libya Relations: Overview of the Arab Spring and Libya's Uprising (February 2011)**

During the winter of 2011, the American and international agendas were focused on the status quo issues of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>121</sup> However, deep structural changes in the public spheres of the MENA region resulted in a balance of power shift in favor of the publics from autocratic regimes.<sup>122</sup> Tunisia, Egypt and Libya's uprisings shared many of the same underpinnings (social, economic and political problems). In the late 1980s, the three states pursued a degree of economic and political liberalization that ultimately impoverished the middle and lower class.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the liberalization programs actually undermined the autocratic regimes causing splits in the business elite and further alienating the educated middle class with the increased arbitrary state behavior, lack of rule of law and rising corruption.<sup>124</sup> The economic and political liberalization efforts fueled more dissent

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<sup>121</sup> Lynch, Mark. 2012. *The Arab Uprising*. New York: Public Affairs. p. 67.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Zoubir. 1999. p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

among the populations of several of the MENA countries and ultimately aided in the fall of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan regimes. Massive public protests throughout December 2010 to February 2011 forced Tunisian President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak from power.

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt increased existing tensions in Libya. For observers without prior knowledge of Libya's domestic social, political and economic problems, it appeared as though the Libyan protestors were simply following their North African neighbor's uprisings. However, as previously discussed, the Libyan government was not only the decades-long target of various armed internal opposition groups, it also suffered a serious lack of legitimacy among the majority of its citizens. Although, the post-9/11 era provided some hope for Libyans in terms of economic and potential political development, the overall disenchantment with the state was rampant.

State violence was a key reason for this bitterness. In the Libyan city of Benghazi, the families of the victims of the 1996 Abu Salem prison massacre had organized in order to request information from the Libyan government regarding the prison killings. On February 11, 2011, security personnel arrested Fathi Terbil, a Benghazi lawyer, representing the families of the victims of the massacre. The arrest of Terbil sparked a planned 'day of rage' (February 17<sup>th</sup>) protest in Benghazi. As the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt unfolded, the tension in Benghazi escalated. Protests started before the official 'day of rage' that was planned. On February 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, protests began in the city of Benghazi and later spread to other eastern Libyan cities. Libya's initial nonviolent protests quickly erupted into an all-out secession, or multiple separate



secessions, from the failed Libyan state.<sup>125</sup> The majority of western Libya (with the capital of Tripoli) was a stronghold for the Libyan government. The rebels held much of eastern Libya and the rebel city of Benghazi.

The shared characteristic of the protestors in the three North African nations did not represent one faction of society or political orientation; their unification was in the pursuit of the demise of their corrupt and ineffective autocracies.<sup>126</sup> Although, the majority of Libyans supported the overthrow of Qadhaffi, his regime's support base was broader than the dictators of Egypt and Tunisia.<sup>127</sup> Ultimately, the Libyan uprising was profoundly different than the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Libya experienced a part uprising-part civil war against the 42 years of Qadhaffi's dictatorship.

The widespread feelings of alienation were shared by the majority of Libyans in relation to the Libyan state, and are rooted in the decades of exclusion, oppression and injustice that were practiced by the successive authoritarian systems of the Turkish, Italian, the monarchical regime and the post-1969 military regime of Qadhaffi.<sup>128</sup> Mabrooka Al-Werfalli's book, *Political Alienation in Libya* (2011) argues that the attitude of alienation is a basic predictor of important political behaviors.<sup>129</sup> Her study focuses on the post-1969 regime as political alienation grew throughout the period of the self-proclaimed Libyan revolution, as conditions of alienation including other factors (i.e., outbreak of corruption, diffuse distrust and unrelieved dissatisfaction) have all

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<sup>125</sup> Anderson, Lisa. 2011. 'Demystifying the Arab Spring' *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/collections/foreign-affairs-coverage-of-the-crisis-in-the-middle-east>

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Toensing, Chris. 2012. 'Libya's Lessons' Shared Content with Institute for Policy Studies in *Middle East Report*. Retrieved March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from [http://www.merip.org/newspaper\\_opds/oped030512](http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opds/oped030512)

<sup>128</sup> Al-Werfalli, Mabroka. 2011. *Political Alienation in Libya: Assessing Citizens' Political Attitude and Behaviour*. Ithaca: Ithaca Press. p. 123.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

contributed to the serious erosion of Qadhaffi and his regime's legitimacy.<sup>130</sup> There are two explanations for the conditions that instigated the individual in Libya from passivity to radical (the armed Intifada and protests, pre-2011) and revolutionary behavior (The Arab Spring). One hypothesis is that a generational gap is an important element of political alienation in Libya as 60% of Libya's population was below the age of fifteen in 1996.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, the majority of the population does not share a significant investment in the historical legitimacy of the post coup regime in addition to having extreme dissatisfaction as a result of the lower standard of living in Libya.<sup>132</sup> A second hypothesis is that the regime's failure for successful reform compelled the individual in Libya to adopt active behavior.<sup>133</sup> Both hypotheses ring true in Libya's case. As the Libyan state failed the majority of Libyans by lacking a shared political ideology and failing to meet their basic economic needs, their growing dissent destabilized the government.

The authoritarian regime in Libya largely based its legitimacy on its revolutionary character, however after decades of misrule, the leftist ideology of the regime rang hollow. A new criteria of legitimacy was demanded by the Libyans and others across the MENA region,<sup>134</sup> and it was here that Qadhaffi's regime fell short. As mentioned previously, the Libyan intifada, unlike the Tunisian, Egyptian, and Yemeni intifadas is unique because of its armed character and as a result, is viewed more as a war than a revolution.<sup>135</sup> Since Qadhaffi responded to internal opposition (particularly the Islamist uprisings from 1996 onwards) and previous demonstrations in such a violent manner, it

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p. 168.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 177.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p. 176.

was widely understood by Libyans that only extreme violence and sabotage from citizens would weaken the regime until it was brought down.<sup>136</sup> A second feature would be the tribal character of the armed forces (and the state), and the weak institutions of Libyan state and society. All of these issues contributed to the tendency towards fragmentation, which subsequently played out in the streets.

### **The International Military Intervention in the Libyan Conflict (March 2011)**

Libya attempted to ensure security and maximize its power by normalizing relations with the U.S. This strategy, however, had its limits. When the Arab Spring complicated political relationships and the regime sought to retain its grip on power through violence, the Libyan regime found little support among its allies. The Qadhaffi regime, in short was expendable. Qadhaffi was acutely aware of the political and economic power possessed by the U.S., Western Europe and the Arab Gulf states. He often vocalized his distrust of these state leaders and the international system in general. Frequently, he publicly insulted specific state leaders for policy decisions. He was particularly very critical of Arab heads of state yet, he often expressed his concern for the shared future of Arab leaders, especially in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. During a 2008 Arab Summit Meeting in Damascus, Syria, Qadhaffi criticized the Arab states for allowing the U.S. to invade and occupy Iraq and warned them that any Arab state could be the next U.S. target.<sup>137</sup> Qadhaffi's daughter Aisha even served as a lawyer on the deposed Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's legal defense team during the Iraqi Special

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Otterman, Sharon & Mackey, Robert. 'Qaddafi Erupts, on Schedule' in *New York Times*, The Lede. March 30, 2009. Retrieved November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/there-was-no-shortage-of-drama/>

Tribunal that began in October 2005. Qadhaffi viewed the invasion of Iraq as a further threat to his regime's survival. Therefore, despite the fact that Libya restored relations with the U.S., the relationship proved hollow once the Libyan government used excessive force on the protesters during the Arab Spring. The Libyan conflict brought uncertainty within Libya's borders and with its relationship with the U.S. Libya, just recently accepted as a U.S. ally, quickly erupted into a civil war. This violence ultimately made Qadhaffi more of a liability for the U.S. in the eyes of the international community, particularly in the Arab World.

Although the main focus of this project is U.S.-Libya relations, it is impossible to ignore other powerful states, transnational alliances and international institutions that influenced the debate on the intervention in Libya. It is in this context that one can see how both the Arab World and the international community's demands for an intervention in Libya was quite complex; personal animosities and political motives drove the Gulf States objectives for intervention, humanitarian considerations informed the news coverage, and the Western animosity towards the Qadhaffi regime all played into the unfolding situation.<sup>138</sup>

The Gulf state animosity towards Libya is rooted in both fear and personal animosities. Qadhaffi and fellow officers staged a coup against the Libyan Monarchy in 1969 and the Libyan government supported 'freedom fighters' all around the world that ignited fear in the Gulf Arab monarchies in addition to states benefiting from the status quo. Qadhaffi regularly dismissed the prestige that the Saudi rulers enjoyed as a result of their close relationship with the U.S. and their guardianship of Islam's holiest sites.<sup>139</sup> He

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<sup>138</sup> Lynch. 2012 p.173.

<sup>139</sup> Kawczynski. pp. 70-71.

often called for the Arab World to wage *jihad*, or a holy war on the Saudi Monarchy and take control of the holy sites.<sup>140</sup> Libyan involvement is also rumored in the bombing of the Saudi embassy in Sudan in March 1973.<sup>141</sup>

In addition, in July 2004, Qadhaffi was accused of plotting an assassination attempt on then Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.<sup>142</sup> Qadhaffi publicly embarrassed Saudi King Abdullah and Qatari Emir Hamad Al Thani on numerous occasions. On one such occasion, at an Arab Summit in Doha in 2009, Qadhaffi publically called King Abdullah a "British product and American ally" and when the host of the summit, Emir Al Thani attempted to quiet him, Qhadhaffi walked out of the summit.<sup>143</sup> Therefore, it became no surprise that King Abdullah and Emir Al Thani were key figures in support of the Libyan rebels.

Moreover, an important element of the framing of the Libyan conflict and the Arab Spring was the media coverage ran by Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera is a Qatari-owned media outlet, owned by a member of the Qatari Royal Family (Emir Al Thani), therefore raising important questions pertaining to Qatari intentions behind the coverage of the Arab Spring uprisings in North Africa, and specifically in Libya.<sup>144</sup> The intense focus and negative portrayal of the media coverage on the state violence against protestors in Libya, not only gave the Libyan rebels more prestige in the Arab World, but the coverage also framed the public debate on an international intervention in Libya. The overall

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

<sup>142</sup> Lichtblau, Eric. 'Islamic Leader to Plead Guilty in Libya Plot' in *New York Times*. July 30, 2004., U.S. Section. Retrieved November 4, 2012 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/30/us/islamic-leader-to-plead-guilty-in-libya-plot.html?scp=10&sq=Al-Amoudi&st=cse>

<sup>143</sup> 'Gaddafi Storms out of Arab Summit, Slams Saudi King for Pro-Americanism' in *The Huffington Post*. April 30, 2009, World Section. Retrieved November 4, 2012 from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/30/gaddafi-storms-out-of-ara\\_n\\_180661.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/30/gaddafi-storms-out-of-ara_n_180661.html)

<sup>144</sup> Lynch. 2012. p. 174.

narrative in the Arab World was of Libya as the defining factor of the ultimate Arab struggle against authoritarianism and its outcome was seen as fundamentally tied to the fate of the entire region.<sup>145</sup> If Qadhaffi continued his reign on power, it would have had a devastating psychological affect on the entire region.<sup>146</sup> Al-Jazeera became the voice of the Arab Spring and ultimately was used as a weapon in regional politics through its coverage.<sup>147</sup> Al-Jazeera's coverage of the conflict in Libya was highly emotionally charged in the Arab World as Qadhaffi's brutality occurred at the highest point of the Arab World's identification to the struggle after the successes of Cairo and Tunis.<sup>148</sup>

In the West, the debate for intervention was focused predominately on humanitarian grounds. Intervening militarily in a foreign conflict constitutes a violation of a sovereign state's rights, however, the question as to if and when a military intervention should take place in a foreign conflict can become a moral dilemma. The international outcry for the failure to respond quickly to threats of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity compelled the U.N. to establish the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Initiative in 2005. Ideally, this initiative would aid in better decision-making in terms of selected interventions by the international community, however it can also promote fear and provide justifications for interventions that perhaps are not truly warranted. Therefore the general debate on intervention and the use of the R2P initiative are clearly sensitive issues since decisions such as intervention, war and reconciliation are fueled by 'realpolitik' objectives in an ever-changing world.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid. p.173.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. p. 90.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. p. 168.

In Washington, the debate about supporting a military intervention in Libya was contentious, even within the Obama Administration. President Obama claimed that the intervention was predominately for humanitarian purposes<sup>149</sup> and it is clear that the humanitarian considerations made by Obama's Human Rights Advisor, Samantha Power, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the U.S.'s U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice helped motivate key officials in the administration in support of the intervention. The argument was based on a liberal internationalist perspective and goal of activist foreign policy. The Obama Administration was concerned about preventing a potential humanitarian crisis in Benghazi and throughout Libya. This is particularly true since the Clinton Administration is haunted by the outcomes of past interventions and inaction.

The 1993 bloody humanitarian mission in Mogadishu, Somalia produced fear in the Clinton Administration in terms of future interventions. The U.S. inaction in the 1994 Rwandan genocide is still heavy on the conscious of former President William Clinton, former first lady Hillary Clinton, and former security advisor Susan Rice.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, the conflict in Yugoslavia led to the July 1995 genocide of more than eight thousand Bosnian males in the U.N. safe haven town of Srebrenica, Bosnia. These veterans of the Clinton Administration feared that a similar slaughter was about to unfold in Benghazi and that American military power ought to be used to avoid repeating a past mistake of not intervening.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Remarks by President Barak Obama in his Address to the Nation on Libya. March 28, 2011. National Defense University Washington, D.D. State Department Website. Retrieved 9/11/2011 from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya>

<sup>150</sup> Pollit, Kathy. 2011. 'The Nation: News Flash, Women Aren't All Pacifists' *National Public Radio*, Partner Content from *The Nation*. Retrieved December 3<sup>rd</sup> from <http://www.npr.org/2011/03/23/134788807/the-nation-news-flash-women-arent-all-pacifists>

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

Samantha Power, then a journalist, covering the war in Yugoslavia was a tough critic of the Clinton Administration's inaction in both Rwanda and Yugoslavia. She questioned the administration's complicity with the Rwandan genocide in her piece 'Bystanders to Genocide' in the September 2001 *Atlantic* magazine. Moreover, in her book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (2003). Power provides an analysis of genocides in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and argues that America's response in preventing genocide has been tragically inadequate. The Rwandan genocide inspired a sense of urgency from Hillary Clinton, Rice and Power when Qadhaffi threatened violence towards Libyan dissidents.

The case for intervention was also fostered by such diverse politicians and opinion-makers, Bill Clinton, Bill Kristol, Fareed Zakaraia as well as Newt Gingrich, Christopher Hitchens, John McCain and John Kerry. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman John Kerry, a close confidant to President Obama warned of repeating mistakes made in Iraqi Kurdistan, Rwanda, and Bosnia and Herzegovina by failing to step in and halt a slaughter.<sup>152</sup>

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates along with National Security Advisor Thomas E. Donilon and Counterterrorism Chief, John O. Brennan, opposed U.S. involvement in Libya. They shared a realist perspective towards an intervention in Libya; they opposed U.S. involvement in Libya and did not view Libya as a vital strategic interest.<sup>153</sup> According to Gates, Libya is not a vital interest yet the U.S. does has

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<sup>152</sup> Sanger, David E. & Shanker, Thom. 'Discord Fills Washington on Possible Libya Intervention' in *New York Times*, Middle East. March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Retrieved November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/world/middleeast/08policy.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>153</sup> Cooper, Helene & Myers, Steven Lee. 'Obama Takes Hard Line With Libya After Shift by Clinton' in *New York Times*, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Retrieved December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011 <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/19/world/africa/19policy.html?pagewanted=all>



interest in Libya and the region.<sup>154</sup> Others argued that an intervention in Libya should only occur if there is a convincing case for intervention, an understanding of who the U.S. and its allies would be supporting and an actual comprehensive military plan.<sup>155</sup>

Some argued that inaction in Libya would not only be morally wrong, but it would appear as though the international community would condone extreme state violence from other autocrats in the Middle East and around the world.<sup>156</sup> Others argued that not intervening would ultimately lead to American intervention later in addition to the possibility that Qadhaffi would return to his nuclear program and support for terrorism.<sup>157</sup>

The fear of genocide in Libya framed the discussion within the U.N. Security Council on Libya. The U.N. Security Resolution 1973 demanded an immediate ceasefire and authorized the international community to establish a no-fly zone across Libya, including the authority to use all means necessary short of foreign occupation to protect civilians.<sup>158</sup> Princeton University law professor Asli Bali explains that from a legal perspective, the Libyan intervention is unprecedented as it's the first Security Council-authorized humanitarian (military) intervention.<sup>159</sup> Appearing on *Democracy Now* (2011), Bali agreed that some sort of military intervention should have taken place,

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<sup>154</sup> Jackson, David. 'Gates: U.S. Has Interest in Libya, Not 'Vital' Interest' in *USA Today*, The Oval. March 27, 2011. Retrieved November 6, 2012 from <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2011/03/obama-gates-clinton-libya/1#.UKHLWbROTwx>

<sup>155</sup> Douthat, Ross. 'Iraq Then, Libya Now' in *New York Times*, Opinion. March 13, 2011. Retrieved November 7, 2012 from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/14/opinion/14douthat.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/14/opinion/14douthat.html?_r=1&)

<sup>156</sup> Fly, Jamie M. 2011. 'Libya is a Problem From Hell' in *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved January 16<sup>th</sup>, from [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/16/libya\\_is\\_a\\_problem\\_from\\_hell?page=0,1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/16/libya_is_a_problem_from_hell?page=0,1)

<sup>157</sup> Abrams, Elliot. 2011. 'U.S. Military Intervention for Libya?' Council of Foreign Relations Website. Retrieved May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.cfr.org/libya/us-military-intervention-libya/p24362>

<sup>158</sup> UN Security Council's Press Release on Resolution 1973 (2011) Retrieved 3/11/2011 from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10200.doc.htm>

<sup>159</sup> Bali, Asli. 2011. 'Intervention Interrogated. *Bitterlemons*. Ed. 17 Vol. 9 - June 16. Retrieved January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from <http://www.bitterlemonsinternational.org/previous.php?year=2011>

however direct political engagement with the Libyan government should have occurred.<sup>160</sup> The binary way (intervene or not) in which the options towards the Libyan Regime are framed was very problematic.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, the considerations by the coalition concerning its will to intervene in Libya are based on the isolation of the regime, its weak military, its possibility of migration flows to Europe and its potential to destabilize energy markets are clearly among the motivations to engage in the Libyan conflict.<sup>162</sup> Bali also contends that the Libya does not equate with a casual relationship to the use of force by the regimes in Yemen or Bahrain, these developments are occurring simultaneously and the coalition forces are supporting both the Bahraini and Yemeni regimes' and that in itself is a troubling intervention of its own in the context of the Arab Spring uprisings.<sup>163</sup>

Although it is acknowledged that a humanitarian consideration did compel the intervention; critics, however, argue that the underlining interests of the U.S. and other collaborating countries must be questioned. It might seem ironic that certain western countries turned against Qadhafi, yet these countries understand that they have more to gain from a new regime in Libya. Three key factors that helped determine the intervention are arms, energy and refugees. The U.S. and Western Europe have interests in arms deals to the new Libyan government, The Transitional National Council (NTC), its access to Libya's natural gas and crude oil in addition to preventing the Libyan and Tunisian refugees to the European Union.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Bali, Asli, interview by Amy Goodman, Wednesday, March 23, 2011, 'Debating Intervention: Is U.S.- Led Military Action the Best Solution to Libya Crisis?' *Democracy Now*. Retrieved March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from [http://www.democracynow.org/2011/3/23/debating\\_intervention\\_is\\_us\\_led\\_military](http://www.democracynow.org/2011/3/23/debating_intervention_is_us_led_military)

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy pressed the case for intervention in Libya. Some argue that As previously discussed in Chapter 2, Libya's problematic relationship with France was a key determinant of its tough stance against the Libyan government. interest in border control and access to Libyan oil is key to Sarkozy's incentives. The E.U. has great interest in North Africa and Turkey since they are viewed as a threat to its social and political stability.<sup>165</sup> Conflict in Africa leads to massive illegal migrations to the E.U. and the fall of Tunisian dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali along with the armed revolt against Qadhafi resulted in 41,000 refugees at the Italian Island of Lampedusa by June 2011.<sup>166</sup> Therefore, both France and British Prime Minister David Cameron had their national interests and the overall interest of the E.U. fueling their decision on intervention.

These national (domestic and E.U. level) interests, among those of the U.S. were also tied to Libyan oil. France and Britain, like the U.S. did not want any disturbance to the world oil industry. And as noted earlier, Libyan oil is in high demand since its crude oil is cheaper to refine and cheaper to transport to the West since it does not have to travel through the Arabian/Persian Gulf. Oil exploration had begun in the 1940s in Libya and it is still believed that much of Libya's oil reserve has not been tapped, therefore a priority for numerous oil companies. American oil companies had lobbied Congress in order to return to Libya since they were forced to leave in the 1986 by the Reagan Administration. Qadhafi was known to irritate oil companies by raising fees and taxes along with other demands therefore, it was in the interest of both the E.U. and U.S. to

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<sup>165</sup> Henry, Clement & Springborg, Robert. 2010. *The Politics of Globalization in the MENA*. New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 31

<sup>166</sup> Feldman, Greg. 2011. 'Europe's Border Control with a Humanitarian Face' in *Middle East Report*, 261 (Winter).

foster close ties with a new Libyan government. The countries that supported the Libyan rebels did so with the goal of repayment by priority in oil rights, concessions and overall business relations with the new Libyan government.

The appearance of the entire Arab World's support was critical for the intervention in Libya. The Arab League is a notoriously fragmented organization in which numerous of its twenty-two member states either boycotts meetings or vote due to political differences. Nevertheless, support for an intervention in Libya was obtained from member states of the GCC (specifically Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E.). Although, these states represent a very small percentage of the Arab World, they were key players in aiding in the intervention and ensuring that the rebels were successful. These monarchies fear for their survival and as previously mentioned, the history of personal antagonism between Qadhafi and the Saudi King was a key factor in the Saudi support for intervening in Libya.

Qatar was also instrumental in the Arab League's effort to urge the U.N. to establish a no-fly zone in Libya and to a large extent it funded the revolution with massive amounts of money, weapons, supplies and training. Qatar's military joined the NATO campaign and sent six Mirage fighter jets to Libya.<sup>167</sup> The benefit of the GCC support was twofold: it allowed for a Western interference in the Arab World with less political recourse while it presented the Gulf states as supporting pro-humanitarian and pro-democracy in Libya, while they simultaneously cracked down on protestors within their borders and in the case of Saudi Arabia and U.A.E., in Bahrain with support of the

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<sup>167</sup> Robert, David. 'Behind Qatar's Intervention in Libya: Why Was Doha Such A Strong Supporter of The Rebels?' in *Foreign Affairs*, Features. The Council on Foreign Relations. September 28, 2011. Retrieved November 10, 2012 from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68302/david-roberts/behind-qatars-intervention-in-libya>

U.S. These international alliances were instrumental in determining the fate of the Libyan civil war and the subsequent uprisings in the Arab World. The interests of the GCC countries and their regional aspirations are key to understanding their support for the intervention in Libya as a basis for the counter-revolution. From the very beginning of the conflict, Qatar provided arms and training to the rebels and aided in securing massive amount of funding to the NTC.<sup>168</sup>

The rebellion in Libya, over time might have succeeded in the downfall of the regime, however the conflict would have led to an increased destabilization in the region and increased immigration to the European Union. Therefore, a quick resolution to the conflict was a priority for the European Union members of NATO and the U.S., both for strategic and humanitarian reasons. The military answer to the civil unrest in Libya via the U.N. and NATO. began with a no-fly zone over Libya. The subsequent U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 (UNSCR 1973) gave authorization for further efforts to destabilize the Libyan government by not ruling out any means of protecting Libyan civilians.<sup>169</sup> On February, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1970. It targeted financial and travel sanctions on Qadhaffi, his family, key Libyan officials in the retime and imposed an arms embargo on Libya.<sup>170</sup>

The cultivation of popular opinion for the international military intervention in Libya created specifically by *Al-Jazeera's* media coverage amid the international community permitted the Libyan conflict to represent the advancement of not only Libya,

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<sup>168</sup> Sotloff, Steven. 2011. 'Why the Libyans Have Fallen out of Love with Qatar' in *Time Magazine*. Retrieved January 2012 from <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2103409,00.html>

<sup>169</sup> United Nations Security Council's Resolution (1973) <http://daccessddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>170</sup> United Nations Security Council's Resolution (1970) [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1970%20\(2011\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1970%20(2011))

but of the democratic state in the Arab World. However, behind the scenes, a very different outcome, orchestrated by powerful states and international alliances would prevail.

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011, French warplanes began the air attack on the Libyan government. The coalition of French, British and U.S. warplanes followed and targeted the Libyan government with strikes intended to take out Qadhaffi's air defense system. U.S. warships also surrounded Libya and fired cruise missiles on various targets. At the end of March, the coalition transferred the mission to NATO. NATO was responsible for the enforcement of the no-fly zone and the arms embargo against Libya. As NATO air power aided the rebels with the balance of power against the regime, it was not sufficient for the rebels to take over Tripoli. Battles over cities ensued and this bloody stalemate continued until in mid-May, NATO air strikes aided the rebels in securing the strategically important coastal city of Misrata. Tripoli fell to the rebels on August 21, several months after the fighting first started. Finally, in October 17<sup>th</sup>, the cities of Sirte and Bani, both regime strongholds of the regime Walid fell. Sirte ended up being where Qadhaffi was found. Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>, Qadhaffi's 40-car convoy was hit by NATO airstrikes and resulted the rebel's capture and execution of Libyan leader.

After months of fighting, the NATO mission had achieved its objective. However, it is important to scrutinize the U.S. and international community's complacency in stalling the Libyan revolution. The renewed relations with Libya made the revolution (long in the making) even more difficult as it normalized relations with Qadhaffi and accepted the authoritarian regime back into the international community allowing

corporate and national security interests to trump the interests of Libyans.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, it is important to note that the U.S. and the Western European countries (namely Britain and France) were forced to change their relations with the Libyan government when the reality on the ground changed in February 2011, therefore, Libya is not a foreign policy success for the U.S.<sup>172</sup> The U.S. stalled the progress of the impending revolution in Libya by restoring ties with the Libyan government.<sup>173</sup> The renewed relations with Libya did indeed bolster the authoritarian regime and allowed the Libyan government to further oppress dissidents and stall democratic reform. However, when conditions on the ground changed in Libya and the uprising kept growing, it was evident that the U.S. government needed to take a side. The U.S. supported military intervention was driven by strategic and moral considerations, and thus over-determined. The Libyan government's infamous and unreliable history and its marginalization from other Arab states allowed the U.S. to quickly abandon its former ally and plan for regime change with the European and Arab states.

### **The Counter-Revolution**

Libya was part of a larger revolution stalled in the MENA region. The intervention in Libya prompted many questions and anger in terms of the fundamental justification for intervening in Libya. It also raised inquiries and resentment about the intervention in relation to the violence in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen. As previously

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<sup>171</sup> Mattar, Hisham, interview by Charlie Rose. October 20, 2011. "Analysis on Libya after Gaddafi with David Ignatius of 'The Washington Post,' authors Hisham Matar and Lisa Anderson, President of the American University in Cairo" *Charlie Rose*. Retrieved October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from [www.charlierose.com/view/content/11956](http://www.charlierose.com/view/content/11956)

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

discussed, Libya was an overall easy country for the West and GCC states to intervene in for various reasons. Bahrain, Syria and Yemen are all unique cases that entail different outcomes in terms of U.S. foreign policy and the international response. Before briefly discussing each case, an understanding of the important historical political struggles in the MENA region is helpful in understanding the contemporary politics that affected the U.S. and international community's responses to the violence in Bahrain, Syria and Yemen.

The inter-Arab relations of the 1950s-1960s were dominated by the power struggles between “revolutionary” republics, led by pan-Arab nationalist military officers, of which Libya belonged, and the more conservative or reactionary monarchies.<sup>174</sup> While countries such as Libya attempted various failed pan-Arab unification projects, the revolutionary republics and the conservative monarchies waged proxy wars in civil conflicts in other states such as Yemen, Lebanon and Jordan.<sup>175</sup> The power struggles, ideological and identity conflicts including the waging of proxy wars exist today in the inter-Arab relations, however the main difference is that the revolutionary republics became authoritarian states and have experienced national revolutions.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, the similarity between the global cold war era of the 1950s and 1960s and the contemporary Arab cold war is the mobilization of the conservative monarchies in their attempt to block further change in the Arab regional system.<sup>177</sup> The mobilization of the conservative monarchies and the U.S. was key to the counter-revolution.

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<sup>174</sup> Ryan, Curtis. 2012. ‘The New Arab Cold War and the Struggle for Syria’ in *The Middle East Report*. (Spring).

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.



The Arab uprisings of 2011-2012 deepened divisions of the Arab cold war, of which include sectarian lines (Sunni-Shi'a).<sup>178</sup> Moreover, as Cairo and Damascus dealt with uprisings, and Baghdad endured the U.S. occupation, the GCC countries, (specifically Qatar) rose to be the most active force in regional politics.<sup>179</sup> As previously discussed, Qatar played a key role in the Libyan conflict with its supported the Libyan rebels. Qatar, home to largest U.S. military base in the region U.S. Central Command, demonstrated its regional power aspirations and ability to impact the outcomes of the Arab Spring uprisings. Qatar's rise to power impacted the uprisings in Libya, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, as no countervailing force to challenge the conservative monarchies existed.<sup>180</sup>

As a result of the veto of the Arab League proposal in the Security Council concerning an international military intervention in Syria, it is argued that the Syrian conflict will become more violent with arms coming in to support both the Assad Regime and the Syrian resistance groups.<sup>181</sup> The GCC's call for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to leave are not in favor with the democratization of Syria, but in hopes of a successor Regime that is predominately Sunni and eager for closer ties with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and allies.<sup>182</sup>

Therefore, the intervention in Libya was not only 'safe' but it lacked Washington's true support for democratic reform in the Arab world. From the evidence, it would seem that the Libyan intervention was not meant to make an example for other Arab dictators and that it was not a coincidence that the same day the U.N. passed its

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

resolution on Libya, Saudi forces were sent to stop pro-democracy protestors in Bahrain.<sup>183</sup> Bahrain's proximity to the U.S. Fifth Fleet is the rationale behind the Saudi troops crackdown on democratic protestors during the Arab Spring.

In mid February, when the Bahraini ruling family feared it was losing grip over the country, it sought the GCC for help. Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and Qatar sent in thousands of reinforcements (soldiers and police) into Bahrain to restore order and bolster the Bahraini ruling family. Therefore, there was a military intervention in Bahrain, supported by the U.S. and carried out by the three GCC countries, however this intervention was to stabilize the regime. Afterwards, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa imposed a three-month 'state of national safety' while Bahraini security forces began a systematic attack on demonstrators around the Kingdom.<sup>184</sup> The intervention was carried out primarily due to the fact that Bahrain is a critical American ally in the region and home to an important military base, the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, in order to safeguard American strategic interests in the Arabian Gulf, Washington is essentially undermining the prospects for Bahraini democracy. Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E. and Qatar are also worried about instability in their neighboring countries and therefore have their strategic and national security interests in mind.

The Yemeni government has also cracked down on its Arab Spring-inspired democratic protestors. However, Washington's main concern in Yemen is its ties with al Qaeda. U.S.-armed Special Forces protect Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh and

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<sup>183</sup> Toensing, Chris. 2011. 'A New Clarity for Washington' Shared Content from Bitter Lemons International in *Middle East Report*. Retrieved January 10<sup>th</sup> from [http://www.merip.org/newspaper\\_opeds/oped120111](http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/oped120111)

<sup>184</sup> International Crisis Group. 2011. 'Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain Revolt. (Brussels, April)

<sup>185</sup> The U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet is based in Manama, Bahrain. The Fifth Fleet is responsible for naval operations in the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Arabian Sea and the coast off East Africa as south as Kenya. It shares a commander and headquarters with U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT).

U.S. trained Yemeni forces have been used by the Saleh government against opposition-affiliated tribal leaders in the capital of Sana'a.<sup>186</sup> The U.S. involvement in Yemen is driven solely by counter-terrorism and has nothing to do with promoting democracy as is true for the entire MENA region.

Some observers, such as Vijay Prashad assert that the Libyan rebellion was 'hijacked' in early March of 2011 by the Atlantic Powers (Britain, France, Germany and the U.S.) in addition to Qatar and Saudi Arabia, in an effort to counter the threat to U.S. security and Saudi rule.<sup>187</sup> The intervention in Libya allowed for the counter-revolution, or in other words, the maintenance of the status quo in the Arab World, specifically pertaining to the Atlantic States access to oil in addition to the stability of Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf emirs.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, the pressure that the Saudi Government and other Gulf Arabs put on the U.S. in particular for an intervention as they were faced with the uprisings in both Bahrain and Yemen is critical.<sup>189</sup> Direct western military intervention occurred in Libya because it was neither prevented nor restrained by security factors or strategic alliances, nor did it risk damaging western-Arab relations, all of which Bahrain and Syria represent.<sup>190</sup>

Yemen's Arab Spring experience is also unique. President Saleh's lack of legitimacy is compounded with those of the historic north-south Yemen divide including the U.S. military presence supporting the war on terror. The Yemeni government, like the Libyan government also cracked down on the uprisings that occurred during the Arab

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<sup>186</sup> Browning, N., Fielding-Smith, Abigail & Khalaf, Roula. 2011. 'Yemen Deploys US-Trained Special Forces' in *Financial Times*. Retrieved January 10<sup>th</sup> from <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6f6cf516-8d0d-11e0-815d-00144feab49a.html#axzz1jZqEeUmh>

<sup>187</sup> Prashad. 2012. pp. 160-161.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. p. 161.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Aliboni, Roberto. 2011. 'A Confused Western Intervention' in *Bitterlemons*. Ed. 17 Vol. 9 - June 16. Retrieved January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from <http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?year=2011>

Spring, however, similarly, in the case of Bahrain, the U.S. is supporting the government. Washington's main concern in Yemen is its ties with al Qaeda, therefore resulting in U.S. support for Yemeni President Abdallah Saleh. U.S.-armed Special Forces protect Saleh and U.S. trained Yemeni forces have been used by the Saleh government against opposition-affiliated tribal leaders in the capital of Sana'a.<sup>191</sup> The U.S. involvement in Yemen is driven by counter-terrorism, which trumps the promotion of democracy. Saudi Arabia's main concern in Yemen is border security.

Other critics such as Noam Chomsky, contend that the need to protect the supply of oil provides guidance for western reactions to the Arab World's democracy uprising.<sup>192</sup> This provides a framework for understanding all of the events of the counter-revolution, one which supports a neo-Gramscian critique of the neo-liberal project. This argument is most obvious in the U.S.-Saudi supported crackdown on democracy protests in Bahrain and the U.S.-U.N. intervention in Libya. An oil rich dictator who proves to be a reliable client is secure, but an unreliable client such as Qadhafi is not preferable.<sup>193</sup> Consequently, the argument is that the NATO intervention in Libya reflects a broader effort by the West to seek control, or at least dependable clients in the Middle East, and in the case of Libya, access to large untapped areas presumed to be rich with oil.<sup>194</sup> The promise of more oil discovery in Libya was certainly an added benefit of regime change for all states that participated. It is clear that the U.S. decision to intervene in Libya was the result of more than one determining factor; rather a persuasive case was made on both

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<sup>191</sup> Browning, N., Fielding-Smith, Abigail & Khalaf, Roula.

<sup>192</sup> Chomsky, Noam. 2011. 'Libya and the World of Oil' Truth-Out.Org Website. Retrieved November 4, 2011 from <http://truthout.org/libya-and-world-oil/1301900400>

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

humanitarian and strategic considerations. Moreover, Libya historically has always been an exception for U.S. foreign policy and an easy target for U.S. aggression.

The intervention occurred as a result of Libya's persistent vulnerability in the New World Order. Its isolation within the Arab World, and absence of genuine allies meant there was no real political risk for the U.S., U.N. or NATO intervention. Libya proved to be an opportune moment for Washington to appear as a defender of human rights and democracy in the Arab World without great political risk associated with meddling in the region. In addition, the U.S. became a key player in the role of rebuilding the Libyan state and economy as well as the Gulf states. Furthermore, as Human Rights Watch documents the growing violence and deaths in Syria, the swift intervention in Libya further illustrates Libya as an exception in U.S. foreign policy towards the Arab Spring, and an overall international network of countries seeking the maintenance of monarchies and authoritarian regimes in the MENA.

### **Post-Qadhafi Violence in Libya**

Two significant aspects of the Arab World's response to the state led violence in Libya were that for the first time in the history of the modern Middle East, Arab regimes and the majority of the Arab people agreed that Arab leaders should not be protected by state sovereignty when committing atrocities against their people.<sup>195</sup> However, the difficulties and violence remain for Libya. Since the NATO mission ceased, the new Libyan transitional government, the NTC recognized by the West is not in control of the country; instead hundreds of separate militias roam Libya.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, the violence in

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<sup>195</sup> Lynch. 2012. p. 163.

<sup>196</sup> Toensing. 2012.

Libya did not end with the end of NATO's military campaign. In the aftermath of violence from the war and Qadhaffi's murder, the Libyan society was faced with difficult tasks such as healing the society after war, beginning to build a civil society in addition to promoting democratic institutions. In order to achieve these goals, Libya's main challenge is nation-building, which requires national identity construction and the creation of a public administration.<sup>197</sup> These tasks were sidelined, as security was still a great concern for Libyans. Although the Libyan interim government, the National Transitional Council (NTC) was quickly recognized internationally, in Libya, their legitimacy as a transitional government has not coincided with the international acceptance. For the majority of Libyans, this lack of legitimacy is derived from the fact that defectors from Qadhaffi's regime were key figures in the formation of both the NTC and rebel national army. Therefore, suspicion of the old order prevails. Regional dynamics in addition to the agenda of Islamists and secularists have created a sensitive dynamic in the country. Suspicion and the massive influx of weapons into the country have created a volatile environment. NATO and Qatar ignored the UNSC resolution's arms embargo and supplied weapons, training and tactical instructions to the rebels.<sup>198</sup>

Some questioned the credibility of NATO's Operation 'Unified Protector.' As Claudia Gazzini argued, the complex political environment that ensued in Libya following the intervention has bred an enormous amount of bloodshed. Even though NATO's operation was marketed as a humanitarian operation, the death toll after NATO's involvement was at least ten times greater than the death toll reported during the

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<sup>197</sup> Anderson. 2011. 'Demystifying the Arab Spring'

<sup>198</sup> Toensing. 2012.

first few weeks of the uprising, therefore exacerbating the violence.<sup>199</sup> The exacerbated violence was also bolstered by the fact that the Libyan rebels constituted a network of independent militias, these groups continued to operate independently within Libya. As diverse armed militias were controlling separate areas of Libya, uncertainty and mistrust continued to prevail.

Alternatively, it can be argued that Qadhaffi's legacy of lawlessness and mistrust in Libya will be difficult to overcome as four decades of unpredictable cruelty resulted in various scores left to be settled in Libya; informers to be exposed and revenge.<sup>200</sup> The majority of the mistrust and appetite for revenge was based on the brutal repression of any regime opposition via a network of intelligence agencies including the Internal Security Agency (*Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Dhakhli*), the External Security Agency (*Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Kharaji*), the Military Intelligence Service (*Jihaz Al-Amn Al-Askari or Istikhbarat*), the Revolutionary Committees (*Al-Lijan Al-Thawria*), Revolutionary Guard (*Al-Haras Al-Thawri*) and informants, who acted with complete impunity and were above the law.<sup>201</sup>

As a result of this atmosphere, Libya's current environment is not promising for any government, much less democracy.<sup>202</sup> The multitude of problems that would entangle Libyan society after Qadhaffi will not be solved in a short time-frame as the Libyans are basically building their state from scratch. The regime prevented the development of stable institutions, civil society and economic associations that led to

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<sup>199</sup> Gazzini, Claudia. 2011. 'Was the Libya Intervention Necessary?' in *Middle East Report*, 261.

<sup>200</sup> Anderson. 2011. 'Scores to Settle'

<sup>201</sup> Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya. United Nations Security Council (p. 12). Retrieved May 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 from [www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/.../A\\_HRC\\_19\\_68\\_en.doc](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/.../A_HRC_19_68_en.doc)

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

widespread corruption, decades of cruelty and suspicion.<sup>203</sup> The violence that occurred after Qadhaffi's death was the result of numerous conditions; the arbitrary cruelty cultivated by the Libyan government, its oppression of opposition and its practice of nepotism. This violence was heightened by an unorganized (in terms of a lack of civil society) and fragmented society (regional and tribal). Political alliances, networks of economic associations, or national organizations of any kind are banned in Libya.<sup>204</sup> Libyan society has been fractured by the mistrust in its government, resulting in every national institution, including the military, is divided by kinship and region.<sup>205</sup> Coupled with the massive arms flowing into the country, the situation was increasingly volatile.

When security is reinstated in Libya, its lack of social and governmental unity will impede its democratization and the international isolation resulted in the generation in its 30s and 40s unprepared to manage the country.<sup>206</sup> Libyans will continue to mistrust the political process until a more legitimate governing body and national institutions are developed, specifically in defense, policing and vital service delivery.<sup>207</sup> An early sign of the inability of the NTC to govern Libya was its failure to force the Misratans to hand the bodies of both Qaddafi and son Moatassim in addition to their killers.<sup>208</sup> The struggle to disarm the militias across Libya, which brought down the regime, will be a difficult yet important step in securing the country and moving on. In addition to Libya's obstacles of stability and democratization, those who rise to power in the post-Qadhaffi era will have

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<sup>203</sup> Anderson. 2011. 'Scores to Settle'

<sup>204</sup> Anderson. 2011. 'Demystifying the Arab Spring'

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> International Crisis Group. 2011. *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges After Qaddafi*. (Tripoli/Brussels, December).

<sup>208</sup> Pargeter, Alison. 2012. *Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi*. Yale University Press. p. 245.



done so based on opportunism rather than popular legitimacy.<sup>209</sup> However, the Arab Spring has proven that democracy will in fact merge in Libya and the Middle East. The transition is just a matter of time.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusion**

The main research question of this study is ‘why was Libya a target for U.S. military intervention in the Arab Spring?’ In order to answer this question, I have examined the incentives for both Libya and the U.S. to normalize relations in addition to the impact that 9/11 and the 2011 Arab Spring had on U.S.-Libya relations. In addition, I studied why the U.S. supported the Libyan rebels in the 2011 civil war rather than the Libyan government, a recent U.S. ally. This examination led to inquire on the internal dynamics of the Libyan state, a brief overview of historic and contemporary U.S.-Libya relations and an examination of the causes for the E.U. and GCC member states’ support for the Libyan rebels.

Incorporating themes from Neorealism, liberal interventionism and neo-Gramscian analysis allowed for a broader understanding of Libya’s vulnerable position in the international state system, foreign policy rationale for military intervention in Libya as well as insight on Libya’s relations with powerful states and the institutions they created and control in order to protect their interests. Libya’s vulnerability in the international system resulted in its aggressive reformist policies following the 1969 coup that were meant to spread Libyan influence and strengthen its international prestige. The Libyan government used its oil wealth to support a nationalist revolution within its

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<sup>209</sup> Editorial 2011. ‘Of Principle and Peril’ in *Middle East Report*, 258 (Spring).

borders and attempted to export this revolution by supporting groups fighting the status quo powers all over the world. These policies, the support for international terrorist networks and its nuclear weapons program made it a focus of harsh U.S. foreign policy. The Libyan government's history of antagonizing and embarrassing leaders and civilians from the U.S., Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and Qatar resulted in its demise. The Libyan state's violent reaction to its Arab Spring uprising resulted in international intervention in support of anti-government forces.

The liberal internationalist foreign agenda based on humanitarian rationale warranted the necessary military, political and economic support for regime change in Libya. This agenda was cultivated and carried out in order to ensure that another government did not commit mass killings while the international community failed to respond. This agenda was also carried out by the states that had the power to intervene with the international legal framework in which they drive and manipulate in the U.N., NATO and the ICC<sup>210</sup>. The neo-Gramscian IR perspective incorporated in this study emphasizes how those who chose to defy the rules of the dominant capitalist elites (ie. 'rogue states') and act in the interests of the both their state and citizens are punished with sanctions, international isolation or military force. Libya has endured all of three punishments, directly from the U.S. Congress and through Washington's powerful transnational financial and political relationships, resulting in international alliances and organizations that were used to manipulate Libya into following the imposed norms of international neoliberal system or suffer the consequences.

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<sup>210</sup> In February 2011, in response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970, the International Criminal Court opened an investigation on crimes that were alleged to have been committed in Libya during the uprisings. The Court issued three arrest warrants for Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi, Abdullah Al-Senussi and Muammar Gaddafi.

This study took an in-depth look at both the domestic and international constraints facing the Libyan government as it sought rapprochement with the U.S. In light of the other key states supporting the intervention, the U.S.-Libya relationship provided an important window to the many mechanisms used by the global hegemonic government and its influence over international organizations in order to pressure weaker states to follow their rules and the harsh prices they pay if they refuse. The Libyan government that came to power in the 1969 coup, was steadfast in their disapproval of the international system and the neocolonial influence that the Third World countries were subjected to. The Libyan government's belief in the illegitimacy of the international system led to its support and training of numerous 'terrorists/freedom fighters' of which harassed numerous states around the world.

Over the course of 42 years, the Libyan government had alienated itself within its own borders as well as in the international community through its anti-West and anti-Gulf monarchy rhetoric and policies. The U.S.-Libya rapprochement was primarily driven by economic incentives as well as the Libyan regime's desire to maintain power. It was no surprise then that Qadhaffi, after a decade of normalization efforts and acquiescing to U.S. demands, was quickly cast aside. Even after 'making peace' with the West, Qadhaffi became a political liability for the U.S. as a result of its extreme use of state violence in the early days of its 2011 protests/uprising. Abandoning Qadhaffi's government not only allowed the U.S. to aid in preventing the possibility of increased bloodshed, it also allowed the U.S. to potentially be viewed in a more positive light in the Arab World as a result of its support in the demise of the Qadhaffi's regime.

The U.S. support for an international military intervention in Libya was driven by U.S. interest, yet ultimately was influenced by a larger agenda. This agenda included European states (Britain and France) and Gulf monarchies (Saudi Arabia, Qatar and U.A.E.) commercial interests regarding Libya's oil and natural gas reserves. Britain and France's national interests in relation to Libya and their historic animosities toward the Libyan government are key to their support of the international intervention. The Gulf monarchies desire was to target a despised enemy and thwart the momentum of the Arab Spring in order to ensure their survival.

This study demonstrated my initial argument, that the U.S. led-international military intervention in Libya was over-determined. The Obama Administration did have a sincere fear about Qadhafi's forces attempting to commit genocide in Benghazi and other eastern Libyan cities. This humanitarian focus served as a pretext for U.S. support of a military intervention. The Libyan government's political alienation, even within the Arab World, along with Qadhafi's unpredictable nature made Libya an easy target for an international military intervention by the powerful NATO members and the GCC countries during the Arab Spring. The fact that Libya is strategically located in North Africa and has abundant untapped oil and natural gas reserves only made it more attractive to key players in the intervention. The American oil firms will have lucrative futures in Libya, as they were awarded numerous oil and natural gas concessions.

As demonstrated in this study, Libya proved to be a unique case study since its uprising was half peaceful, half armed rebellion and resulted in an attempt at succession or multiple successions from a failed states. It was also unique in the fact the 42-year-old 'revolutionary period' left its society and economy deeply fractured and isolated from the

international world. Qadhaffi, the nationalist revolutionary was fearful of a true revolution and attempted to ensure his regime's future by alliances with powerful states.<sup>211</sup> The Libyan government failed at disrupting the status quo, therefore, it was forced to integrate into the very system it loathed.

While the Arab Spring demonstrated the MENA region citizen's symbolic rejection of authoritarian rule, it also revealed inconsistent U.S. foreign policy toward the uprisings and questions the sincerity of its rhetoric on democratic reform in the Arab World. The Obama Administration supported the uprisings in North Africa while calling for democratic reform and even out-right military intervention as in the case of Libya.

All three IR paradigms, realist, liberal internationalist and neo-Gramscian provide insight on why the Obama Administration abandoned Qadhaffi's regime and supported the intervention. In realist terms, The Obama Administration needed to take a calculated move. It would have been extremely unpopular to allow Libyan state forces to crush the uprising or the armed rebellion. Especially considering the anti-Americanism in the region as a result of past U.S. foreign policy as well as the unpopular wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Perhaps the Obama administration and other key leaders in the intervention also assumed that the new Libyan government would prove to be a more reliable ally who is more sympathetic to Western and Gulf Arab economic interests and influence.

Liberal internationalists champion for international norms and the moral obligation to limit the ability of a state leader to unleash extreme violence on its populace. The Obama Administration took this responsibility seriously. Key officials and presidential advisors were keen to argue for the necessity of an intervention.

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<sup>211</sup> Kawczynski p. 166. As cited in Fisk, Robert. 'Gaddafi Vows to Expel a Million' in *The Independent*. October 19, 1995.

A Neo-Gramscian perspective takes into account the transnational alliances, international financial and legal institutions the U.S. had influenced greatly in terms of the building support for an intervention in Libya. The U.S. relations with key E.U. and the Arab League members solidified the political and financial support for the military intervention. The U.N. aided in freezing billions of dollars of Libyan assets abroad and restricted travel for Qadhaffi, his family and inner circle. The U.N. also provided the legality for intervention with the UNSCR 1973. These alliances and institutions, in Gramscian terms, were ‘tools of U.S. hegemony’ and aided in sustaining the status quo in the Arab Gulf.

Meanwhile, the Obama Administration supported counter-revolutions elsewhere. The international military intervention in Libya coincided with the counter-revolution led by the Saudi government in Bahrain (aided by the U.A.E.) alongside the U.S. in Yemen in order to maintain the traditional power dynamics in the Arab World. Therefore, although, the U.S. did support the anti-government forces in Libya, its commitment to bolstering true democratic reform in Libya is questionable at the least. Yet, war, and the rebuilding of countries after warfare is big business and the U.S. will be greatly involved in the reinvigoration of Libya’s economy with its exploration, technology and infrastructure updates in Libya’s oil and natural gas sectors.

The U.S. involvement in the reconstruction of Libya won’t be without its problems. The initial gratefulness shared by Libyans who supported the NATO intervention, will fade as distrust of the U.S. political and economic influence over the NTC and Libyan future governments will highlight the deep mistrust of American intervention in Libya and the Middle East in general. This is especially true as Libyans

understand that their experience in the Arab Spring was unique in terms of the international support for the anti-government forces. Moreover, the U.S. did not support the intervention for democratic reform, rather, Libya served as a buffer zone between the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and the halted revolutions in Syria and the Arab Gulf.

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