

A Southern connection: Chadian extraversion policies and the repercussions for the Libyan territory

La politique tchadienne d'extraversion et ses répercussions sur le territoire libyen

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**A SOUTHERN CONNECTION:
CHADIAN EXTRAVERSION POLICIES AND THE
REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE LIBYAN TERRITORY**

ABSTRACT

Drawing on field research conducted in Chad, this paper examines Chadian extraversion policies and its outgrowths in the remaking of post-2011 Libya. It posits that the increasingly outward-looking positioning of Chadian state and non-state actors contributes to a redefinition of the Libyan boundary system. While the formation of the Chadian state and territory owes a significant debt to Libya, the fragmentation of the Libyan political centre has turned it into a target for foreign policy initiatives designed by both heavyweight world powers and its neighbouring countries. The new Chadian extraversion policies benefit from the strategic advantages linked to Chad's location at the crossroads of turbulent zones and the sound reputation of its armed forces abroad. This extraversion policy may be aligned with the federalist push initiated by certain regional Libyan leaders, in spite of outright rejection by international mediators. While various armed movements have been striking at the Chadian regime from the borderlands for some time, the idea that they might directly or indirectly meddle in the Libyan political process has led to worried reactions in both countries. It is therefore worth paying attention to this region, because it is likely that some part of the political future of Chad and Libya will be settled there.

Since 2011, the countries that share their borders with Libya have been looking anxiously at the factious contests at play in Cyrenaica, Fezzan and Tripolitania. The Skhirat agreements signed in Morocco in 2015 have failed to unite the existing competing leaderships of the Government of National Accord (GNA), the General National Congress (GNC) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar in the East. Observers and involved policy-makers have set off repeated alarm bells with regard to the possibility of a partition of Libya, given the diverging pathways of the three historical regions. Both veiled and outspoken foreign interventions in Libya are currently being scrutinised in the literature. This interest especially concerns Egypt, given the Al Sissi regime's ambiguous support of General Khalifa Haftar in Eastern Libya. The case of Chad attracts less attention, which is probably a result of the more infrequent coverage the country triggers.

Based on field research in Chad, this paper builds on interviews of Chadian officials, researchers, and journalists, along with investigations of documents at the *Centre d'Études et de Formation pour le Développement* (CEFOD) in N'Djamena, which inform the changing relationships between Libya and Chad. The paper explores the consequences of recent Chadian extraversion policies for Libyan territorial patterns. Post-Gaddafi Libya is currently experiencing open struggles between the forces of General Khalifa Haftar, which are based in Tobrouk, and the government of Faiez Sarraj in Tripoli. Although the government enjoys international recognition, it remains highly unpopular in Cyrenaica; if anything, Haftar has sound support in the region and is reputed to be a valuable military commander, although his aura is essentially limited to his eastern stronghold. Eager to burnish his international credentials, Haftar has looked both eastward (to Egypt) and southward (to Chad) in order to establish a sounder transnational network. One of the issues at stake for his LNA is to preserve access to the strategic "oil crescent" of the eastern coastal zone and ensure the funding that is indispensable for extending his control over Libya.

According to the original idea of "extraversion" (Bayart 2000), the observed dependence of Africans is erected as a mode of action in many cases. Africans have never been passive subjects in their international environment; if anything, "external constraints" are commonly used as an "instrument" by "native holders of power and by other political actors" (Bayart 2000: 224). In this paper, I suggest that it would be pertinent to adopt a modified version of the notion in order to properly convey the complexity of Chad's influence on Libya. This concept will be more extensively developed in the next section to address the following questions: In what way has Chad developed original extraversion policies in recent years? What are the factors and actors that have driven such these policies? How are they influencing the territorial reconfiguration of Libya?

While the partition of Libya has been looming since the events of 2011, the literature has to a large extent neglected Chad's role in the uncertainties that characterise Northern Sahara. This paper aims to provide insights into the

“Southern connection” of the territorial struggle that is taking place in Libya. It looks at the turmoil affecting Libyan territory as having been partly shaped by recent military and political developments in Chad, especially the ongoing Chadian rebellion in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti region (Northern Chad). This is not a paper on Libya *per se*; rather, it is empirically and theoretically directed towards ongoing Chadian debates. It analyses how the competing powers that are agitating Libya are fuelled by internal affairs in neighboring countries, foremost among them Chad. This phenomenon embodies a historical volte-face, in that Libya has been meddling and interfering in Chadian issues for many decades. Finally, the paper argues that Chadian political struggles in the medium and long term may crucially percolate into the showdowns for territorial control of Libya and the competing leaderships in the country.

First, the paper looks at Chadian-Libyan relations from an historical perspective. Second, the Chadian policies of extraversion are analysed. Third, the repercussions for the reshaping of the Libyan territory are considered.

CHADIAN-LIBYAN AGENCY BETWEEN WAR AND PEACE

This section addresses the intricacies of the Chadian-Libyan relationship from a historical perspective, and stresses the significance of a series of involvements in the framing of territorial boundaries, national identities, and statecraft.

Ironically, the absence of any single sound constitutional order in Libya has incidentally alleviated the aggressive stance that Libya and Chad have historically taken, as demonstrated in seminal works dealing with Chadian-Libyan relationships (see, for example, Azevedo 1998, Buijtenhuijs 1987, Otayek 1984). Chadian officials currently construe their Libyan neighbour as an uncontrolled, self-disruptive flashpoint enfeebled by divisions, in sharp contrast with the cohesive – and significantly dangerous – regional power it had become at the peak of the Gaddafi era. However, the elimination of Libya as an effective, outward-looking state actor on the international stage since 2011 does not signify that it poses no threat in the eyes of Chadian President Déby and his entourage. Instead, the transition from a state-based, unitarian threat led by Colonel Gaddafi to a “polycephalous”, unstable political constellation has complicated – rather than simply mitigated – tensions in bilateral affairs from the Chadian viewpoint.

Chad and Libya share an intimately intertwined history. The very close connection between Southern Libya and Northern Chad has had a range of social implications, as illustrated by the property and land conflicts between

them¹ (Scheele 2016). Rebellious organisations that have frequently toppled the holders of power in N'Djamena since 1960 have taken refuge in neighbouring lands on several occasions, not only in Sudan but also in Libya. The laborious formation of the Chadian state, principally through – or in spite of – volte-faces triggered by political takeovers and civil conflicts owes a significant debt to Libya. Chad has also periodically been an attractive site for lucrative Libyan investments in sectors such as transport, real estate and finance in periods of peace (Bennafla 2000). In 1970, Colonel Gaddafi's newly-established regime in Libya began meddling in the ongoing Chadian civil war by providing financial and material backing to a faction of the FROLINAT who had been rebelling against Francois Tombalbaye's government since 1966, because it was deemed to be too close to the French and dominated by Chadian southerners. This paved the way for a series of skirmishes between 1978 and 1987 that regularly pitted Chad against Libya, culminating in the so-called "Toyota war" (because of the frequent use of Toyota pickups by fighters from both sides), which marked a generation of fighters and contributed to the formation of a combative national identity in Chad. In 1973, Colonel Gaddafi invaded the Aouzou strip, claiming Libya's full sovereignty over this 114,000 km² territory located between the 18th and 19th Parallels (North) on the basis of a treaty signed with Italy in 1935 (Azevedo 1998, Burr & Collins 1999, Nolutshungu 1996, Ronen 2008). The removal of President Tombalbaye in Chad in a 1975 coup worsened bilateral relations, and Libya entered a full-scale war with the *Forces Armées Nationales Tchadiennes* (FANT), while the FROLINAT became increasingly divided on the Libyan and French presence, leading to a split in 1976. Sovereignty over the neighbouring Aouzou strip has repeatedly been disputed. Colonel Gaddafi, on the other hand, frequently viewed Chad as a fruitful experimental terrain for application of his constant, subtle back-and-forth between pan-Africanist and Pan-Arabist ideologies (Neuberger 1982, Ronen 2008). Libya's position also turned the Chadian regime into a tangible prize worth struggling for in order to preserve Western influence in Central Africa. From the unified *Front National de Libération du Tchad* (FROLINAT) to the *Gouvernement d'Union Nationale de Transition* (GUNT), the Chadian *politico-militaires* (rebels) have been forced to position themselves with the Libyan role to be played in N'Djamena (Otayek 1984, 1986). Despite this, Libyan involvement in Chad has remained nuanced since the deposition of King Idriss of Libya in 1969, and has faced a number of decisive volte-faces based on the various streams inside Chadian rebel movements and successive regimes. Indeed, the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti (BET) region

1. The Sanusiyya, the Libyan clan that settled in Borkou in the early 20th century, developed a legal system for private property (Ibid, 2016:122). Many expropriations were carried out from the 1980s onwards, which led to confusion and conflict over ownership of land (Ibid: 133).

emerged as a significant geopolitical instrument for the enhancement of Gaddafi's influence in Central and West Africa during the Cold War in the fight against the post-colonial order imposed by the French and the United States.

The Libyan national leadership has historically directly or indirectly shaped the political and territorial balances of its neighbours. In the face of the disintegration of its national cohesion, however, the leadership has been turned into a toothless object for competing foreign policies. The three main political centres, along with the multifarious militias, have devised their own international strategies, building networks of alliances that venture in spectacularly opposing directions. This context is currently favouring the rise of extraversion policies and their influence over Libya.

THE NEW CHADIAN EXTRAVERSION POLICIES

This section analyses Chadian extraversion policies as a series of historical and contemporary strategies. Although my outlook is somewhat state-centric and I pay more attention to Chadian regimes, I also look at non-state actors based in Chad, foremost among them rebel groups.

The idea of extraversion policies in Africa as construed by the "*politique par le bas*" academic school of the late 1980s focused on the alleged ability of African societies to turn the "external environment" into resources and eventually appear as active participants in global politics and economies (Bayart 2010, 2000). The concept moved away from the structural explanations upheld by dependency theorists at the time, and nuanced state-centric approaches by placing the emphasis on bottom-up strategies and social movements. It was later extensively debated and reworked (see, for example, Mbembe 2001). This paper retains a critical element of the original concept, namely the mobilisation of the external environment to further political agency. For example, the regime of Idriss Déby Itno (IDI) profited from its inclusion in global agendas to display a robust resilience in the 2000s. Nevertheless, while Bayart and his supporters view extraversion as being primarily related to exchanges of things and ideas, it is understood here in a more aggressive manner, one that includes violence and force. In the case of Chad, both recent military interventions in neighbouring countries and reliance on the part of rebel movements on foreign bases account for extraversion strategies.

Throughout the course of the 20th century, various phenomena and trends, including the emergence of *coopérants* networks and the rise of cotton farming and exports, have demonstrated Chad's entanglement in the global economy and political order. However, the current regime has expanded the realm of its extraversion on a strikingly broader scale. In the 2000s, Chad gradually projected an image of stability in a turbulent and dangerous area, as illustrated by the humanitarian crisis in Darfur (see Marchal 2016), to its Western partners. It

is possible to identify at least two dimensions of this extraversion that have been profitably rebranded by the regime so that it can maintain its grip on the country: the oil production programme and spatial benefit.

The Chad-Cameroon oil extraction programme was designed in the 1990s and effectively began in 2003. Its various aspects have been extensively discussed in the literature (Behrends 2008, Hoinathy 2013, Magrin 2001, 2013b, Magrin & Van Vliet 2012, Reyna 2011). Importantly, it associated a number of international contractors and sub-contractors with the Chadian public authorities and the World Bank, which granted the Chadian government a major loan through its financial arm, the International Financial Corporation. This motley crew created an international platform that brought Chadian elites and decision-makers together with international contractors and developers. As such, the project gave the Chadian authorities considerable prominence on the international stage and became a textbook case of a resource extraction initiative co-supervised by a range of international contractors. In the first years of exploitation (roughly between 2003 and 2008), the oil programme came under widespread criticism from civil society activists, academics and opposition politicians in Chad and abroad in a civil war context. This phase of conflict ended temporarily in 2008 with the opening of a fragile period of peace and increases in oil prices. At the time, skyrocketing state oil revenues led to a brief and intense “oil euphoria”, cutting off several of the voices that were opposing oil extraction and its management. As we will see later, this ephemeral euphoria was naturally associated with Chadian military expansion and its involvement in regional conflicts.

A second version of the Chadian extraversion strategy relates to strategic advantages, or accumulated “spatial capital”, in a global context of worsening security threats in the Sahara-Sahel region. Indeed, Chad benefited greatly from its location at the crossroads of Africa to morph into a focal military headquarters for interventions in North, East, Southern and West Africa. It further burnished its already sound credentials with the principal security providers in the region, namely the French armed forces. It then became an indispensable partner, in spite of concerns expressed by French leaders about human rights violations and the worrying longevity of the regime. Surprisingly enough, Chad framed its recurring experiences of civil wars for its benefit as convincing evidence of the value of certain of its elite troops, such as the current *Direction Générale des Services de Sécurité et des Institutions de l'État* (DGSSIE), the Presidential Guard. Instead of seeing the conflicts that have marred Chad since the 1960s as an ominous sign of a tendency towards political instability, the French *état-major* construed them as toughening moments

that helped build a “warfighting spirit” to be reutilised for military deployments beyond its territorial boundaries².

These two epitomes (the oil programme and the spatial benefit) converge as two facets of a single astute, opportunistic external strategy that has paid critical dividends internally. The oil-spatial benefit conundrum characterises the contemporary Chadian state and the IDI regime, and dyadic extraversion strategy such as this cannot be set apart from the military interventionism Chad has displayed since 2012. This does not necessarily indicate any obvious, straightforward causality: it may be difficult to prove that oil production in Chad and/or Chad’s geographical setting *directly resulted in* military operations in the Sahara-Sahel region³. More subtly, Magrin (2013a) argues that the Chadian intervention in Mali is an illustration of the evolution of the Chadian state as combining two critical elements: on the one hand, the violent, historical making of the Chadian state since pre-colonial times that produced a “warfighting ethos”; and on the other, the oil production that started in 2003.

The strategy illustrates the remarkable ability of Idriss Déby Itno (IDI) to translate foreign policy successes into political gains on the national scene. Chadian interventionism has contributed to the revitalisation of a national sentiment. More prosaically, it has also tightened the hold of IDI’s kinsmen from the Zaghawa community over all layers of the state apparatus, in spite of their limited representation in Chad itself (Marchal 2016). This strategy has also downplayed a number of significant bones of contention between IDI and his foreign interlocutors. Arguably, IDI’s relations with the international community had been absolutely dismal, as informed by recent studies (see, for example, Boisbouvier 2015, Marchal 2015). The inauguration of Francois Hollande as French President in the Spring of 2012 initially seemed to be gloomy news for IDI. Indeed, the new French Head of State had reportedly moved towards dismissing the former *Françafricain* shadow networks, of which IDI was one of the iconic figures. Additionally, the Ibni Oumar

2. As noted by Marielle Debos (Debos 2013), the reputation of the Chadian army results partly from the reactivation of colonial clichés that essentialise Chadian people as “*guerriers du desert*”

3. There is a great deal of speculation about the matter, including that oil sub-contractors reportedly “paid” for Mali’s military spending. It is difficult to find reliable sources to substantiate these claims, however.

Mahamat Saleh case weighed considerably on the ruling regime⁴. However, a wind of change began to blow in early 2013 with outbreaks of fighting in Mali and the Central African Republic. These outbreaks added significantly to the discrepancy between the rejection by public opinion of the current form of Chadian polity and its indispensable nature from a Western policy-making viewpoint. Effectively, in spite of its *coups d'éclat* on the international stage, Chad is having to face increasing internal contestations. Political claims have recently taken a notably civilian form, embodied by the recent rise of civil society and political movements like the *Ça suffit* coalition or the *Mouvement pour l'éveil citoyen* (MECI).

Claims have also been reasserted by rebel groups. Although admittedly certain key historical rebellious networks stretching back to the first decade of post-colonial Chad, best exemplified by the now-defunct *Front de Libération National du Tchad* (FROLINAT), have been deactivated, new rebellions have recently been fuelled by a growing rejection of the Chadian presidency. This has created the conditions for momentum on the part of Chadian armed groups. One of the latest embodiments of these groups is the *Front pour l'Alternance et la Concorde au Tchad* (FACT), which was launched by Mahamat Mahdi Ali in March 2016. The Tubu people⁵ appear once again as an engine of the armed movement against the Chadian regime – they had previously been a central component of the forces that attempted to overthrow IDI's regime during the brief 2008 Battle of N'Djamena. Interestingly, Mahamat Mahdi Ali is a former official of two prominent armed groups that received decisive support from the Tubu tribes in the 1990s and fought fiercely against the regime: the *Mouvement pour la Démocratie et la Justice au Tchad* (MDJT) and the *Union des Forces pour la Démocratie et le Changement* (UFDD). Being based in the Chadian-Libyan borderland has proved to be a critical military asset for the Tubu people and other communities. FACT facilities, assets and troops are allegedly located on the Libyan side (Jeune Afrique 2016), which confirms the part Libya will be playing in Chadian politics. Mahamat Mahdi Ali has reported that tensions have recently risen with General Khalifa Haftar as Haftar has sought support from N'Djamena in his fight against the Misrata militias. This may prove to be a factor in a potential redefinition of the Libyan border system.

4. Ibni Mahamat Saleh was the Secretary-General of the *Parti pour les Libertés et le Développement* (PLD) and a leading figure in the Chadian opposition. He was arrested at his N'Djamena-home on 3 February 2008 and has never been seen since. His disappearance has been the focus of several international investigations, which have established that it is most likely that he is dead. To date, nobody has been formally incriminated.

5. The Tubu (or Toubou) people are a group with a presence in Chad, Libya, Niger and Sudan that has historically devoted itself to nomadic pastoralism and farming. Several Tubus have become prominent Chadian political figures, including Hissen Habré.

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THESE POLICIES FOR THE TERRITORIAL RESET OF LIBYA

This final section turns to the implications of Chadian extraversion policies for the reshaping of Libyan territory. I argue here in particular that the Chadian-Libyan border is the locus of significant struggles that may contribute to a redefinition of Libyan territorial policies.

A large body of the literature on borders and borderlands in Africa has viewed them as barriers, and often sources of conflict, and as such they are often conceptualised as constraints, as a burden weighing down state sovereignty and authority (Hoehne & Feyissa 2013). A growing number of authors, on the other hand, are arguing that borderlands should also be treated as resources and opportunities, especially for non-state actors (Korf & Raeymaekers 2013). This idea seems to be very relevant for an analysis of the armed groups operating at the crossroads of Libya and Chad: the marginality of the area and its remoteness from the major political power centres often provide protection against state authority and enable them to survive. These armed groups, along with the multiple political changes that have shaken Libyan since 2011, have been addressed in a number of recent publications (see, for example, Cole & McQuinn 2015). Opportunities to conduct field research in the BET or in the Fezzan have markedly decreased of late, and few scholars have been able to carry out quality fieldwork there. However, a handful of academics have recently engaged with the complex trends in the flows of individuals, commodities and ideas on both sides of the Sahara, breaking down the contrived wall that is conventionally imposed by area studies (Brachet 2016, Brachet & Scheele 2015, Scheele 2016, Tubiana 2016). This literature takes into account the fact that Libya has never been exempt from symbolically charged internal borders. For instance, the Gulf of Sirte historically operates as an effective linguistic delimitation between Northern Africa and the region construed as the greater Middle East. Hence, when pursuing a national project, the Libyan leadership often saw the Gulf as a strategic locus for keeping a lid on the entire territory. The transformation of these symbolic borders into politically charged demarcations is now at stake, however. The establishment of new internal borders within Libya would be a demonstration of the failure of the General National Congress to engineer a peaceful unitary transition in the aftermath of the civil war in 2011. As early as March 2012, Ahmed al-Senussi was heading the self-proclaimed Cyrenaica Transitional Council, benefiting from the disarray within the leadership in Tripoli, and later committing to increasing the sovereign powers of the region. This early political move paved the way for imposing a federal Libya as a serious option, in spite of initial reluctance on the part of the United Nations and Western policy-makers. Oil reserves were a partial motivation for local leaders in Cyrenaica, while a sentiment of national unity was expressed by respected voices in the region. The discrepancy between the solutions being

promoted at an international level and certain local solutions are fuelling resentment, and appear to represent a critical obstacle to peace.

Two dynamics can be distinguished regarding the territorial reshaping of Libya as influenced by Chadian extraversion policies. The first concerns internal borders. Owing to the dead ends encountered by the other initiatives, the federalist option remains steadily on the table in Libya. A federal Libya is not exempt from potential benefits for those who may prefer to deal directly with Fezzan, Cyrenaica, or other local sources of authority: it would enable them to bypass the remote, ethereal authorities of the House of Representatives (HOR) and the General National Congress (GNC) and avoid further intrusions by international interlocutors, as exemplified by the UN envoy to Libya. For now, the path dependency that prevails in international politics with regard to *uti possidetis juris* (the need to preserve existing boundaries) officially precludes any commitment to the principle of a partitioned Libya, but it does not exclude the voicing of bewilderment concerning the possibility of a unitary state. As a consequence, federalism has appeared as a sensible middle ground that would satisfy many of those who are urging for the end of turf wars. It has been framed by local chieftaincies as a necessary evil if a one-state solution is to be preserved. Besides, a number of neighbouring entities would not necessarily reject the end of a unitary Libya, and might even view it as judicious recognition of an existing *de facto* situation. These include neighbouring states who have constant interactions with local forces on both sides of the border. Chadian non-state actors such as the *politico-militaires* also regularly trespass across the physical border in order to carry out activities on the other side. As I have mentioned previously, the FACT's operational headquarters and training centres are located on both sides of the border. For this organisation, whose official aim is to topple IDI's regime, interacting more directly with regional political entities may prove useful for gaining support against the Chadian army. Conversely, it is unlikely that a unified government in Tripoli would meddle so blatantly in the internal affairs of its Southern neighbours. Therefore, a reshaping of Libyan territorial balances with a slant towards federalism may satisfy the FACT, even though their relations with local Eastern forces, especially those of Khalifa Haftar, are fiercely hostile.

The second dynamic relates to international boundaries: while internal delimitations are being reinforced, portions of the external borders are being cautiously sealed off as a result of an outspoken containment policy; indeed, Chad finally decided to close its borders with Libya in 2017. This decision has mainly been presented as a safety measure to prevent infiltration by potential threats, although the nature of these threats has not been disclosed. Paradoxically, the closure may also initiate greater involvement by the Chadian army in Libyan affairs. In fact, the Chadian Prime Minister subsequently declared that the borderlands were a military zone, a measure that has severe legal and social implications for the inhabitants of the BET. The location of the headquarters of the FACT in Tanoua (Chadian territory) with a

training centre in the Djebel Saoudah – in Libyan territory – has explanatory force: the Chadian army is now entitled to ignore civilian rule and operate in the borderlands, including when it engages with rebel forces.

CONCLUSION

Various external interventions and interferences have contributed towards the framing of Libyan policies since 2011, in particular with regard to the twists and turns of its territorial management. Although the weight of the United Nations, important powers such as the United States and Russia and high-profile neighbouring players such as Egypt and Algeria have logically been in the spotlight since that time, Chadian state and non-state entities should not be neglected. The historical intricacy of Chado-Libyan relations has been critical in the making of both polities and society. This has left a permanent imprint on the political cultures of both countries, and has modulated their territorial scope on various occasions, as exemplified by the controversy over the Aouzou strip. This paper argues that the current Chadian extraversion policies are a factor in the territorial reshaping of Libya. As a contested regime whose survival is largely negotiated abroad, the Chadian presidency has developed an outward-looking strategy to strengthen its legitimacy and relevance in an area in which the number of weakened states has risen discernibly. Although West and Central Africa have emerged as the main laboratory of this strategy, it is not inconceivable that North Africa might also experience jolts from this outwardness in the foreseeable future. The official closure of the Chado-Libyan border, the declaration of a military zone and the reactivation of a *politico-militaire* organisation in the borderland are three crucial, interrelated events that potentially signal a hazardous redefinition of the regional political order and its territorial embeddedness.

The complexity of Libyan foreign policy was a decisive factor for Chadian territorial arrangements throughout the 20th century. Now, conversely, the attitudes and actions of Chadian rebels, regular armed forces, and policy-makers in N'Djamena may forge a noteworthy part of the Libyan border system. President Déby has denounced the reluctance of Western states to contribute to “after sale-service” (*services après-vente*) in Libya following Gaddafi's removal. This alleged lack of involvement of the powers that are deemed to be responsible for the current fault lines that pit one Libyan region against another would leave a significant share of peacekeeping responsibilities to the neighbouring countries. These countries, which were far from the forefront of the 2011 military interventions, nonetheless face most of the current burden produced by the turf war in Libya, especially in the Fezzan. Their role is therefore likely to intensify in the very near future, especially if no positive outcome emerges.

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