

A Review of Diplomatic and Democratic Governance in Egypt and Libya

Celestine Ikechukwu Ezike *

Diplomatic Alliance Bureau, PO Box 14719, Wuse 3, Abuja, Nigeria

*ikcezike@yahoo.com

Abstract

This article examines the past governance of both Egypt and Libya in the contexts of diplomacy and democracy. In its entirety, governance stipulates leadership role and policy administration. Therefore, the scope of this essay encompasses mainly the two administrations of Mubarak and Gaddafi of Egypt and Libya respectively. Some literature studies as well as personality influences in the leaderships consequently suggest that citizens were more or less deliberately excluded from participatory governance (democracy) and that indirectly affected both states' diplomatic relations which however undermined and obstructed most international orders as specified by the international system. There was persistence of these exclusion policies in both states irrespective of obvious negative socio-economic effects on the citizenry. A road map was internally generated through extreme civil revolutions that unseated the ailing regimes and ushered in a process of total citizens' inclusion in the governance. This process is believed to have not only a far reaching democratic advantage among the citizens but also an integrative diplomatic channel that will reflect the minds of the people through civil participations.

1. Introduction

The evolution of diplomacy invests in a state a developmental stratum which affirms and strengthens her very essence of existence within the international system. States involvement in the making of global community is prerequisite that encourages states to shade into one another and conform to common principles for interest-maximization through the practice of international relations. Diplomacy then becomes the most feasible vehicle that propels and negotiates states' interests often through their respective missions. This practice stipulates that diplomacy is a cornerstone for state participation and exercise of her sovereignty in international relationships.

Democratic governance, which largely encourages citizens' participation, affords an enabling environment for states to operate. It enhances citizens' potentials and provides them with the opportunity to associate and assimilate contemporary orders in all ramifications. Also, democratic governance, among others, entails maintaining recognizable and acceptable democratic standard of citizens' participation within the states that form part of the international system. In any case, erosion of this standard, either in part or in whole, represents an aggregate defiance from normative set-up for conventional membership among component states.

Such status quo, inter alia, implicitly involves factors that stem from contending views and ideologies drawn vis-à-vis the entire features of developmental stages of diplomacy. It is worth noting here that diplomacy is the basic aspect of international relations; whereas democracy enhances and lays foundation for diplomacy. Invariably, both are, however, interwoven strings that bind states together. Furthermore, while democracy is compatible with the internal structure of states; diplomacy shares such compatibility externally and thus both combine to model up a component unit of the international system recognizable as state. Unarguably, states attitude to democracy reflects in their diplomatic standpoints.

Thus, in retrospect, let us briefly see how diplomacy has adapted into being the most essential feature of international relations. The early empires formed the beginning of states interactions. Supposedly, there was moderate or intense application of coercion in the course since states shading into one another for interest maximization would most probably be received with relative approval or resistance. The obvious factor is that almost all the colonies under the conquest of the West, for instance, were not democratic and this situation contributed to stifling the smooth running of diplomacy. This scenario indeed reflected the intrinsic persuasive nature of the invading powers, such as, the West, whose model of civilization, as enshrined in their diplomacy, had to compete with the existing structures of the receiving states in their diplomatic exploitations.

2. Egypt from Diplomatic Perspective

By and large, the interest of this paper is in the light of recent political upheavals in some African countries. Egypt for instance, witnessed almost more than thirty years of a sit-tight leadership under President Hosni Mubarak. That is, for over three decades, Egypt appeared improbably aligning herself directly or indirectly with the core values set aside for the constituting states of the international system. In President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Speech, Egypt narrowly escaped being blacklisted among the states that constituted "Axis of Evil" (Frum 2003). Escape of this magnitude could have been analyzed as a compromise or adjudged alongside relative views. But I still believe that the US foreign policy experts should have a final say in that. Conversely, one would expect the US to subject China to punitive regime on the grounds of gross Fundamental Human Rights abuses. But alarmingly, China still enjoys outstandingly the US co-operations and attention in terms of expertise and technological transfer.

At this juncture, I am sure that the Chinese population would have lured the US to compromise in such that China has been dubbed "the most favoured nation" (Balaam and Veseth 2001) by some international political economy analysts. The implication of this is the obvious economic advantage Chinese towering population poses to a globalizing and economy-sensitive nation like the US. On the other hand, Egypt's exoneration seems not to have been based on any significant factor, yet, the US de-listed her especially given the obvious indirect harboring and incubating "deranged fanatics bent on jihad" (Frum 2003) and some long standing history of aiding and abetting terrorist acts which, to a large extent, impeded peace talks between Israel and Palestine, though under the regime of Colonel Abdul Nasser, (Overy 1996). It might be a subjective view, but whatsoever is the case, the US would have considered 1973 non-proliferation treaty (NPT) a priority over Jihadism, at least, if she (the US) did not want outright condemnation of Jihad based on confidential and sensitive reasons. The US should have considered nuclear ambition as a general issue and thus not be reluctant to penalizing Egypt featuring nuclear ambition (see Mars S. 2010, in <http://www.thenational.ae/business/energy/egypt-nuclear-ambition-reignites> or log on with Egypt's nuclear ambition reignites).

For sometime in the late 20th century, Egypt did not clearly adopt accessible diplomatic fronts. There were records of her illegal importation of carbon fibre; and respectively nuclear and missiles links with Iraq and Argentina. Still, against the decision of most nations, she (Egypt) blatantly insisted that Iraqi cities should not be violated by air raids when Iraq invaded Kuwait (Darwish and Alexander 1991). These clearly show that Egypt did not really exercise the art of diplomacy to an acceptable standard approved of by most states in the international system.

2.1 Egypt from Democratic Perspective

Evidently, Egypt had great defiance to democracy. The entire citizenry was subjected to no leadership choice. What that connotes is that the governance would most likely be autocratic. In this situation, an

autocratic regime could easily coax her citizenry into an unruly disposition of war mongering. However, this does not, in any way, vindicate the view that victims of war are held martyrs and thus Jihadism remains an acceptable phenomenon. Considering Egypt's fragile democratic foundation and slim diplomatic relationships, one would suggest that application of caution stands to favour a decision not to aggravate already biased 'fanatics' that would see any attempt of liberation as Western imposition and encroachment upon their ways of lives. In this instance, timing becomes imperative as other democratic nations continuously involve her citizens in governance. Thus, the dividends of such involvement would constantly filter through to the domestic politics of the anti democratic states, and the effect of this is eventual revolt against the government.

In Egypt, this TIMING process really worked out. The citizens want democracy. Democracy implies change of governance, idea, vision and opportunity for development. It is strictly against stagnation and social decay. They want full participation in the process of governance. They simply want a change from moribund to dynamic penchant of contemporary trends in the international system. The world is a small village, and so, every state should share in the common interest of globalization, global security, fundamental human rights and of course, democracy. Anything short of these principles would imply a deviation and aberration.

Ousting President Mubarak from power remains a significant revolutionary achievement in Egypt, which incidentally would ripple across to states that share similar sit-tight ideologies in governance. It is a wake-up call for change. Democracy has simply outlived old monarchical system. With the speed of socialization, no one desires to be left out of the scene. Leadership is not patrimony. It rather entails a more meaningful grooming and harnessing of best ideological candidates. Shades of opinions are requisites and are clearly outlined in democratic processes.

3. Libya from Diplomatic Perspective

Externally, Libya projected a "rogue state" characteristic that is most likely trailed to that of the deposed regime of Saddam Hussein of Iraq (Krames 2002). Irrespective of both the internal and external pressures, Gaddafi became indisposed to toe Mubarak's line of resignation in that he (Gaddafi) braced for military actions even against superior external forces like NATO. Furthermore, Libya carried out terrorist acts against the US in the 1986 Berlin discotheque bombing, which led to the retaliatory bombing of Tripoli by the US (Frum 2003).

Moreover, there were unprecedented numbers of terrorist acts against the US as recorded by Frum (2003) including the blowing up of Pan Am Flight 103 travelling from London to New York by Libyan agents over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988. The more direct indictment of the leadership of Colonel Gaddafi on the Pan Am Flight 103 tragedy came from the angle of his refusal to extradite the terrorists based on the flimsy ground "that the strength of public feeling would make it impossible for them (the terrorists) to receive a fair trials" (Burrows 2005). This strained diplomatic attitude lasted for more than ten years that the actual hearing of the two Libyan terrorist suspects commenced in April 1999, in Holland rather. From above, I am sure that both Iraq and Libya slightly shared similar views of terrorism and anti Western (American) ideologies (Frum 2003). All these put together indicate that Libya under Gaddafi was democratically and diplomatically out of tone with the international system.

3.1 Libya from Democratic Perspective

In Libya, a similar movement was the case. The only vent the citizenry could rely on is an uprising targeted to ousting the more than four decades of President Muammar Gaddafi's government. Gaddafi proscribed

civility and almost dictated to the whole citizen. A visionless regime that did not imprint any civil principles on the people, but rather, created total strangulation of political freedom. Libya has long held imprecise political ideologies that would qualify her to be blacklisted among anti-democratic states, of which, such characterization has some traces with the phrase: ‘Gaddafi of Libya’, and of course, the estranged internal socio-political situation of Libya that quickly comes to mind. Libya did not conform to democratic settings required of by the international system. The effect of this was a stand-off that spread like wild-fire between the dissidents and the Gaddafi’s loyalists.

Considering Libya in all capabilities, one keeps wondering why Gaddafi would want to go that far. Why would Gaddafi want to decimate his country in military chaos? Why would he, irrespective of military and socio-economic pressures, want to roll out tanks and parade few daunted loyalists? So many whys? The obvious answer is that Gaddafi’s regime formed part of inherent third world states that deride democracy and still want to usurp power via quasi-monarchical governance. One would be tempted to say that being democratic, in the minds of many non Westerners, means being pro-Western. And since Libya, under Gaddafi, had been on the centre of Western repudiation, the conclusion might then gear towards the view that all the states that undercut democracy especially among the third world African and non African states are simply championing a cause that is biased to Western democracy and civilization. But unfortunately, such a cause, hither-to, seems to lose grips because virtually all contemporary movements are sub-sets of Western ideologies and civilizations which have considerably gained universal acceptance, directly or indirectly.

Democracy is rewarding and the best way to enforce it is to capitalize on internal processes and pressures. Every citizen deserves political participation. Given the prevalent globalizing effects of information technology, citizens make analyses comparatively. Where the democratic standards are improbable, the obvious result is a feeling of being short-changed, a feeling of alienation, a feeling of subjugation and deprivation. These feelings consequently give rise to frantic desires for uprising, disloyalty and by extension, an insurrection in an attempt to unseat the ailing regime. Like Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi’s unpatriotism overtly roped him into chaos. This disposition is what drew international attention to Libya.

Unpatriotism derails a state and drags it backwards from democratic dividends. Unpatriotism is parallel to undemocratism. They are simply factors militating against globalization and global security- and insecurity hampers stability totally. What happened in Libya is a somewhat confirmation of overflow of political disjoints from all the foundations of Libya’s political structures.

To redress this is a need for regime change, which the internal factors have considered worthwhile. Libya, at the onset, should have shaved off its excesses that made it prone to external pressures. Nonetheless, Libya might not stand unique in any parlance as to attract a special waiver in terms of its dissident operations and activities across the globe. Though such waiver could be contentious, if need be, but that leaves us to no point bending rules especially when the movements for regime change started internally. That, to a degree, justifies international support as in the case of Libya.

The advantage of this is that those internal factors would seem to have unending checks and balances in the surge of undemocratic and unruly regimes in that one would be prompted to deduce that swirling of this magnitude is bound to be continual, may be by default, in situations where all internal political elements contextually constitute breaches of civil liberty. Libya is experiencing a rebirth. A rebirth that would be devoid of not only Gaddafi, as already seen, but also of all the elements that perpetrated and perpetuated him in power for more than four decades.

4. Restructuring both States

The compositions of both the National Transition Council (NTC) of Libya (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Transition_Council) and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) of Egypt (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Egyptian_Revolution) to take over governance from defunct regimes, in other words, lay foundations for citizens to participate in governance. Accordingly, the elections of the Libya interim President Mohammed el-Megarif and President Muhammad Morsi of Egypt adequately set to reshape both states internally and externally.

By these achievements, the burden lies now with the two elected presidents whose elections came out of keenly contested ones suggesting great civil desires in political participations. That in mind, both SCAF and NTC stood in for the masses in provisional capacity to make sure that democracy is in its practical sense established as a way of governance. This will transcend to mean that citizens will, after a long time, be opportune to make a choice of leadership via elections. They will, for the first time, may be, begin to bold out their opinions while aligning themselves with the entire polity of the international community. Both states also, will begin to adequately adopt common principles shared by the international system.

5. Conclusion

In all, from the political situations in both Egypt and Libya: the problems emanating from both the democratic and diplomatic fronts are evident reflexes in the civil structures. Citizens' denial to participatory democracy has somewhat negative effects on the states diplomatic relations that featured odd leadership policies of directly or indirectly aiding and abetting terrorism, arm proliferation, nuclear ambition, non adherent to international community resolutions and so on. That, to an extent, called for external support and no matter how the world or African leaders might see it, it was clearly a cause for mandate renewal in total involvement of civil participation in democracy, at least. This single act would unarguably restore hope, sense of diplomatic security and future in the governance since analytically leaders like Mubarak and Gaddafi would have most unlikely made it second term in their offices had elections been conducted in the interims of their more than three decades of visionless governments.

My submission, therefore, is no matter how challenging the process may be, both new governments should rise up to the tasks of reconciliation, revamping and reintegration (3Rs) into the core values of international system--to stabilizing the countries. Still, they should eliminate every trace that would undermine feelings of national unity and patriotism. All hands must be on deck in the rebuilding process and where necessary, the governments should constitute a mediation committee to manage post war sentiments. Above all, the key word should be patriotism void of corruption in official and economic activities. Patriotism should pair with renewal of social and moral consciousness of brotherhood without stereotyping any group. All these are pragmatic measures that would definitely enhance the socio-economic rebirths needed both in Egypt and Libya; and in such countries that have witnessed grave civil unrests.

In an attempt to practically adopt the millennium development goals (MDGs) and achieving economy of scale, most African nations together with developing third world countries inherited challenging and incongruous leadership structures that seem to constitute permanent discordance to the global road maps. The only way out is to create a channel that would manage deep tribal and hegemonic sentiments by giving all factions a voice in political participations, as hinted above, and thus, invariably motivating them to contribute to boost economy from micro to macro fronts: to optimum gross domestic product (GDP) return.

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