2011 LIBYAN UPRISING AND NATO INTERVENTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The study critically evaluated the impact of NATO's military intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising. Specifically, it was intended to protect innocent civilians by imposing a no-fly zone over Libya ordered by a United Nations Security Council Resolution: 1973 or it was carried out to further the global hegemonic interests of the US through NATO's military might. The work utilised a theoretical framework of Collective Security, developed by A.F.K. Organski in 1958, and relied on documentary method of data collection and thematic analysis as its tool or yardstick for data analysis. It was found out that the enforcement of a no-fly zone over the Libyan airspace did not protect innocent civilians, but resulted in toppling of Muammar Gaddafi and his 42 year old regime (1st September, 1969-20th October, 2011), worsening insecurity, fragile and unstable government, proliferation of weapons in Libya and its neighbours, such as Mali and Egypt, Diplomatic failure, Loss of Libya's internal and external sovereignty, aiding the rebels to victory over Gaddafi, decimation of the hitherto stable Libyan society and plunging it into utter anarchy, shattering of the Libyan economy and its endowed oil wealth. Therefore, this brings to the fore, the apparent need for a truly autonomous, robust and impartial Global Authority to check the excesses of the super-ordinate states, such as US, France, Britain and their allies so as to protect weaker states in the global system from the catastrophic drawbacks of an unnecessary military intervention, which has an ulterior imperialist motive. Libya is today a shadow of its former prosperous and stable self under Gaddafi and the hope of stability, peace and sustainable human development continues to fade.

KEYWORDS: Libya, Uprising, NATO, Military, Intervention

Introduction

Libya became entangled in an internal strife that was externally influenced following the eruption of what is popularly called the Arab Spring. Following this, armed Libyan youths took to the streets demanding the end of the regime of Gaddafi, who ruled the state of Libya for almost 40 years as of 2011. Gaddafi initially, resisted this by ordering his soldiers to clear the protesters (Parteger, 2012). This raised international concern and even outcry in some quarters that Gaddafi might have unleashed his military might on both protesters and defenceless civilians.

This move on the surface pushed NATO to secure the approval of the UN to attack Gaddafi and protect innocent civilians. But, it turned out that NATO went far beyond what it was approved for it, as it carried out large scale military operations, capable of obliterating Libya from the world map (Cordesman, and Vira, 2011).

The study was motivated by the currency of the issue and the quest for analysing the impacts of NATO intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising with a view to finding out whether it has resulted in a greater and more developed Libya or not. This is because of the prevailing scholarly arguments that the great north African state of Libya had died with Gaddafi since 2011. Libya was chosen in this study because of the foregoing motivation and the fact that it was the only state during the Arab Spring of 2011 that NATO militarily intervened. The other states were Tunisia, Egypt and Syria.

The paper is divided into ten (10) major sections, starting with introduction, problem statement, methodology, literature review, theoretical framework, remote and immediate causes of the 2011 Libyan uprising, critical analysis of the impacts of NATO intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising as research findings, conclusion, recommendations and finally references.

Problem Statement

This paper asserted that the International System should be reflective of peace, security and stability for the overall human and socioeconomic development of humanity regardless of class, race and geographical location (Organski, 1958).

Unfortunately, this is not what obtains today in the International System, because of the hijacking of the United Nations by the Great powers of the system, especially the USA and its allies and their repeated foreign military interventions through their regional security organisation (NATO). These acts often violate the tenets of International Law and constitute a major hindrance towards the stability and peace of the International System.

The paper, therefore, sought to investigate the root causes of the 2011 Libyan uprising and critically analyse the impacts of NATO intervention in the uprising and give recommendations thereafter.

Methodology

The paper employed the Qualitative Method of data collection, where data germane to the study were systematically sourced, evaluated and utilised in the course of undertaking the study. Therefore, secondary data were sourced from relevant academic works on the 2011 Libyan uprising, the NATO's military intervention and Collective Security. The Internet, in this connection served such a purpose, the Global Research Website (www.globalresearch.ca/globalresearch.org), NATO website (www.nato.int) and the provided NATO LibGuides, which are web-based research guides that contain publicly available pieces of information from the Internet that had been handpicked by the NATO Multimedia Library Staff at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The reason for using secondary data in this study was the availability of the data in qualitative form.

The data were also qualitatively analysed with a view to examining and finding out the real impacts of NATO intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising.

Literature Review

According to Gareth, cited in Chesterman (2011), "the International Military Intervention in Libya is not about bombing for democracy or Muammar Gaddafi's head. He argues, legally, morally, politically and militarily, it has only one justification: protecting the country's people". However, the Council noted that the policy had been used only in Libya, and not in countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, undergoing a political crisis at the time, or in response to protests in Yemen. Furthermore, CFR expert, Stewert Patrick also cited in Chesterman (2011), argued that, "there is bound to be selectivity and inconsistency in the application of the Responsibility to Protect Norm given the complexity of national interests at stake and the calculations of other major powers involved in these situations.

Taking the above argument further, Hehir (2013), opined that humanitarian intervention should be carried out only in the event of a manifest failure on the part of a state to protect its citizens or in the event of gross human rights violations, such as genocide.

Igwe (2013), argued that Gaddafi was marked for death by the West, because of six (6) fundamental issues, which the West, especially the United States of America found highly unpalatable and inimical to its vital global interests. These issues were the African Currency, African Monetary Fund, Seizures of Europe's Little Rent, United States of Africa Proposal, Populist Tendencies and Nationalisation of Libya's Oil. He argued that Gaddafi had ongoing plans to abandon the CFA monetary enslavement of France and align with plans to set up a Pan- African currency backed by Gold which would categorically end the mugging of Africa's resources and enslavement by the West. In the face of a likely success at lobbying for the Pan-African currency and the adverse effects it would have on the United States of America, France, Britain and other Western states who capitalise on the low value of African currencies to sustain unequal trade relations, the West had no option left than to topple the Gaddafi led Government by whatever means necessary.

Igwe also argued that Gaddafi's proposal for the establishment of the African Investment Bank in Sirte, Libya and the African Monetary Fund to be based in Cameroon intended to supplant the IMF and undermine Western economic hegemony in Africa was intolerable for the West, especially the USA and France. These moves were unacceptable to the USA and France because, by the time, the African Monetary Fund and the African Central Bank in Nigeria would begin printing Gold-backed currency, it would ring the death knell for the Dollar, being the World's Reserve Currency and the CFA franc through which Paris maintains its neo-colonial grip on its former colonies on the African continent and which adequately feeds Paris. The idea, according to Gaddafi, was that African and Muslim nations would jointly create the Gold Dinar (new currency) and it would be used in transactions to the exclusion of the Dollar and other currencies.

Pack (2013), argued that Libyans had suffered for 42 years under one of the most capricious and idiosyncratic dictatorships in recent history. He asserted that, the "Jamahiriya," or State of the masses, instituted by Muammar Gaddafi actively sought to undermine its own state institutions in the name of direct governance by the people while maintaining the fiction that Gaddafi, the Brother Leader and Guide, was not actually running the country according to his whims. Pack concluded by describing the tension as a struggle between the 'Centre' and the 'Periphery.'

Joffe, cited in Pack (2013), argued that religious, tribal, labour, political and charity groups were systematically suppressed or co-opted. He asserted that, the suppression of any identities outside of the Jamahiriya was so pervasive that Libyan soccer

players, except for Gaddafi's son who played on one of the teams, were forced to be called only by their numbers; movie theatres remain almost entirely absent from Libya; Libyans' ability to gather in large groups was limited to activities, like the Basic People's Congresses that existed purely to fuel the regime's mythology. In effect, Joffe described the relentless efforts of the Gaddafi regime to destroy any group or even organizing principle that might compete with his Green Book and cult of Personality. He concluded this by arguing that, central to the uncertainty that defines Post-revolution Libya is a lack of consensus about what the new Libya should look like.

Dalacoura (2012), maintained that an explosive mix of socioeconomic problems and widespread and deepening political grievances constituted a common causal thread behind all the uprisings that erupted during the 2011 Arab Spring.

Larsen and Henrik (2011), argued that Gaddafi referred to the NATO military intervention as a "colonial crusade... capable of unleashing a full scale war." This sentiment was echoed by Russian Prime Minister, Putin, describing the "(UNSC Resolution 1973) as defective and flawed… It allows everything. It resembles medieval calls for crusades." Some critics of the Western military intervention suggested that resources, not democratic or humanitarian concerns, were the real impetus for the intervention. They opined that Gaddafi's Libya, despite its relatively small population (5 million people), was known to possess vast resources, particularly in the form of oil reserves and financial capital. Libya is a member of OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and one of the world's largest oil producers, as it was producing roughly 1.6 million barrels a day before the war or uprising, nearly 70 percent of them through the state owned National Oil Corporation.

Larsen and Henrik (2011), further argued that the country's sovereign wealth fund, the Libyan Investment Authority, was the largest such fund in the world, controlling assets worth approximately 56 billion US dollars, including over 100 tons of gold reserves in the Central Bank of Libya (CBL). They further asserted that accusations of imperialism on the part of NATO and the West, especially France, Britain and United States of America were voiced by many leaders of states that had traditionally aligned themselves with the Communist bloc and subsequently Russia.

Anderson (2011), argued that Libya today faces the complexity not of democratisation, but of state formation. Libya will need to construct a coherent national identity and public administration out of the wreckage of the uprising and most importantly, it needs to restore security and introduce law and order.

Theoretical Framework

This paper was based on the Theory of Collective Security developed by A.F.K. Organski in 1958. The underlying the idea of collective security is the assumption that all member-states of the international system share, more or less, the same interests in the maintenance of peace and opposition to attempts by anyone or group of states to change the status quo by forcible means. Peace and security of each and all is, in this view, indivisible because the international system is intertwined to the point where a violation or disruption of peace in one place constitutes a threat to the whole world, which should be resisted by all the other states. In this connection, collective security recommends that restrictions be placed on the ability of any state or group of states to wage war. It enjoins all the others to pool their resources to resist the aggression of any state that constitutes a threat to the international system.

Other assumptions of collective security include: existence of a universally accepted definition of aggression that could be used to determine which of the parties in a dispute is the aggressor and the kinds of actions that should be taken to check the aggression; equal interest among states in resisting aggression anywhere in the world; readiness and ability of members of the international community regardless of any prior commitments that might militate against their willingness to join other states to act against the aggressor(s); that a preponderance of power would be mobilized against the aggressor and that the aggressor's awareness of the actual existence or potential availability of such overwhelming power would, hopefully, serve to deter such an aggressor; and that states which persist in aggressive actions despite the political and military odds will be overpowered through collective efforts (Akeke-Ayeni, 2008:368).

This is relevant to this paper, because it covers all the actions and inactions of state and non-state actors in the International System and the need to preserve and maintain international peace and security should there be a threat to that peace and or aggression waged by another state or a group of states against another state. This theory is chosen alongside the Supporting theory because it provides this research with the most relevant assumptions necessary for achieving the research goals and objectives.

The Theory of Collective Security has these as shortcomings. First, it assumes that all states have an equal abhorrence of aggression and interest in resisting it irrespective of any other consideration. This is because; many times the national interests of states tend to run counter to the idea of collective security and a suitable compromise between the two has often proved difficult to come by. States, especially the big powers, sometimes look the other way when their interests are not at stake, thus leaving aggressors to have their way. Secondly, there is no universally acceptable definition of aggression, as aggression may be military, economic, cultural or psychological. Governments disagree on not only the nature of military aggression but also on which particular kinds of action amount to aggression and which are not. In other words, it is not always possible to identify the aggressors or the undisputed act of aggression. Thirdly, another problem or shortcoming of collective security is that it can only be invoked after an act of aggression has been committed.

This reduces collective security to a curative rather than a preventive measure aimed at containing aggression or war. Fourthly, collective security assumes that all states are equally free and able to join in collective action against an aggressor. Despite its

interest in resisting aggression, a state may not be able to do so because its military personnel may be committed elsewhere. Again, a government, fearing aggression from other quarters, may find it inexpedient to send its armed forces to fight another less pressing war elsewhere. In summary, it could be argued that though collective security appears to be a simple, direct and theoretically effective method for preserving international peace and security, in practice it has proved to be otherwise (Akeke-Ayeni, 2008:368-369).

Remote And Immediate Causes Of The 2011 Libyan Uprising

The remote and immediate causes of the 2011 Libyan uprising include, Gaddafi's Nuclear Programme and Sponsorship of International Terrorism; the deterioration of Libya's foreign relations, especially with United States, which resulted in the bombing of Libya in 1986 by the US; support and sponsorship of radical groups and independence movements that were against the West or anti-West; disbanding of the Sanusi order and its official downgrading; the Attack on regional and tribal differences as obstructions in the path of social advancement and Arab unity and the dismissal of traditional leaders.

Others include, alignment with the Soviet bloc during the Cold War; petroleum politics and Gaddafi's 70% nationalization of Libya's oil; deliberate keeping of Libya's military weak and establishment of death squads; savage and brutal political repression; extreme marginalization of minority tribes and rivals; execution of dissidents through public hangings and mutilation in Libya and assassination of other enemies abroad; Gaddafi's attempts to supplant western interests by proposing to establish the United States of Africa, African Central Bank and African Monetary Fund; unlawful arrest of Human rights lawyer, Fathi Terbil (Forte, 2012).

Critical Analysis Of The Impacts Of Nato Intervention In The 2011 Libyan Uprising

The impacts of NATO's military intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising were critically analysed as follows:

Imposition Of A No-Fly Zone Over Libyan Airspace:

NATO's military intervention achieved an immediate positive result of halting and stopping Gaddafi's forces deadly airstrikes on protesters and rebels, which dramatically reduced the rate of casualties to a small degree, which had hitherto or prior to the intervention had reached epidemic proportions, running into thousands of casualties (Mimoun, 2014).

The Toppling Of Muammar Gaddafi And His 42 Year Old Regime:

The NATO's 2011 military intervention resulted in the immediate toppling of Gaddafi (1969-2011). This is another impact of the intervention, which is achieving regime change and instituting a fragile government run by militias with a weak central government. This further buttresses the fact that "NATO's military intervention did not stop armed conflict in Libya," observes Forte (2012), as it continues to the present. "Massacres were not prevented, they were enabled, and many occurred after NATO intervened and because NATO intervened."

Decimation Of The Entire Hitherto Stable Libyan Society And Plunging Of The Libyan State Into Anarchy:

NATO's military intervention in the 2011 Libyan Uprising did more harm than good, as it resulted in the destruction of the peace and stability, Libya and Libyans enjoyed. More worrisome, is the plunging of the Libyan state into utter anarchy and or lawlessness, abductions, kidnappings, executions have been the order of the day in Libya today. Consequently, several embassies have closed and ordered their diplomatic staff out of Libya. Such foreign embassies are those of the U.S., France, Britain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate, Qatar and many more (Gartenstein-Ross, 2014).

Maiming And Killing Of Innocent Civilians Both Native Libyans And Foreign Nationals, Running Into Thousands:

The biggest misconception about NATO's military intervention is that it saved lives and benefited Libya and its neighbours. In reality, when NATO intervened in mid-March, 2011, Gaddafi already had regained control of most of Libya, while the rebels were retreating rapidly toward Egypt. Thus, the conflict was about to end, barely 6 weeks after it started, at a toll of about 1,000 dead, including soldiers, rebels and civilians caught in the crossfire. By intervening, NATO enabled the rebels to resume their attack, which prolonged the war for another 7 months and caused at least 7,000 deaths. On the whole, it was more that 25,000 deaths following NATO's military intervention in the uprising (Hugh, 2011).

Similarly, conventional account of Libya's conflict and NATO's intervention is misleading in several key aspects. First, contrary to Western media reports, Gaddafi did not initiate or instigate Libya's violence by targeting peaceful protesters. The United Nations and Amnesty International have documented that in all the four Libyan cities initially consumed by the uprising in mid-February, 2011 – Benghazi, Al Bayda, Tripoli and Misrata – violence was actually initiated by the protesters. The government responded to the rebels militarily, but never intentionally targeted civilians or resorted to "indiscriminate" force, as Western media claimed. Early press accounts exaggerated the death toll by a factor of ten, citing "more than 2,000 deaths" in Benghazi during the initial days of the uprising, whereas Human rights Watch (HRW) later documented only 233 deaths across all of Libya in that period (Kuperman, 2013).

The Loss Of Libyan State's Internal And External Sovereignty:

It is too obvious a fact to be denied that, the Libyan state has lost both its internal and external sovereignty to make and enforce laws within its territory and defend itself in the event of a foreign interference or intervention. The NATO's military intervention in Libya stripped it of its internationally recognised sovereignty and aided the rebels who rebelled against the Gaddafi regime up to the regime's collapse. Following this, the Libyan state became a dumping ground, a failed state where other states, such as Egypt and United Arab Emirate carried out airstrikes without any permission whether national or international to do so, which was uncharacteristic of the Gaddafi era.

Therefore, this has turned the Libyan soil into a safe haven or a hideout for terrorists, proliferation of weapons in Libya and its neighbors, such as Egypt and Tunisia as well as a fertile ground for the resurgence of Islamic radicalism (Thielborger, 2012).

Destruction Of Welfarist Jamahiriya Political System And Its Replacement With The Dehumanising Ideals Of Capitalism:

The NATO's military intervention in the 2011 Libyan Uprising resulted in the destruction and termination of the welfarist and socialist-oriented Jamahiriya or state of the mass political system and its subsequent replacement with capitalism. This buttresses the fact that the intervention by the Western powers under the umbrella of NATO was borne out of the desperate need to effect a regime change in Libya and introduce capitalism and popularise its dehumanising ideals (Mimoun, 2014). And now with Gaddafi out of power and even dead, capitalism is rapidly taking its roots and spreading in Libya.

The Shattering Of The Libyan Economy And Its Endowed Oil Wealth And Entrenched Corruption, Poverty And Forced Underdevelopment:

Prior to the NATO's intervention, Libya was producing about 1.6 to 2 million barrels per day of oil, but as soon as NATO intervened, this refining capacity diminished, as most of the oil fields were seized by the rebels and some destroyed, including Ra's Lanuf Refinery, biggest in Libya (Markey and Laessing, 2014). It is instructive to note that the rebels engaged in stealing and exporting the Libyan oil for cash to some members of NATO, such as France, Britain, and even the United States of America, who were purportedly on the ground to enforce a no-fly zone for protecting innocent civilians and protesters from the aerial bombardment of the Gaddafi's forces.

Therefore, this points to the underlying imperialist motive to effect a regime change and install another regime that would be favourable to the West. Today, Libya is a shadow of its former self in terms oil wealth and economic prosperity, in fact, the deteriorating economic and security situation in Libya has reached the extent to which Libyans are running in their thousands out of their former secure and prosperous Libya. Consequently, corruption has become entrenched in the Libyan society and state and poverty is with rapidity taking its roots and forced underdevelopment is visibly permeating the whole of Libya, as critical infrastructural facilities, such as schools, hospitals, refineries, airports, banks, communications lines and many more are being destroyed day in day out in Libya.

Conclusion

The Libyan uprising was not unconnected with the popular resistance in the Arab world, especially in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria. The overall cause of the uprising bordered on the Libyan state's high-handedness and its perceived autocratic approach to leadership. The NATO's 2011 military intervention has now left Libya fractured, as since Gaddafi's fall, the destruction of Libya continues with so many attendant consequences and to date, there is no effective government in place. As such, Libya remains a shadow of its former developed and flourishing self (Kuperman, 2013). Libya is today in a state of dystopian hellishness. The surface intention of NATO's intervention in Libya was to protect innocent Libyans and other nationals from Gaddafi's bombardment(s), but the fact cannot be denied that the military intervention by NATO in Libya was orchestrated in order to further project and promote the national interest of the United States of America. Forte (2012), argued that a massacre was never in the cards, much less genocide, as Gaddafi didn't threaten to hunt down civilians, only those who had taken up armed insurrection and he offered rebels amnesty if they would lay down their arms.

Rejecting a single factor explanation that NATO intervened to secure access to Libyan oil, Forte (2012), presents a multi-factorial account, which invokes elements of the hunt for profits, economic competition with China and Russia, and establishing US hegemony in Africa. Among the gains of the intervention, writes Forte, were: increased access for US corporations to massive Libyan expenditures on infrastructure development (and now reconstruction), from which US corporations had frequently been locked out when Gaddafi was in power; warding off any increased acquisition of Libyan oil contracts by Chinese and Russian firms; ensuring that a friendly regime was in place that was not influenced by ideas of "resource nationalism;" increasing the presence of AFRICOM in African affairs, in an attempt to substitute for the African Union and to entirely displace the Libyan-led Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); expanding the US hold on key geostrategic locations and resources; promoting US claims to be serious about freedom, democracy, and human rights and of being on the side of the people of Africa, as a benign benefactor; politically stabilizing the North African region in a way that locked out opponents of the US and drafting other nations to undertake the work of defending and advancing US political and economic interests, under the guise of humanitarianism and protecting civilians.

It is also a glaring fact that the military intervention in the 2011 Libyan uprising by NATO immensely contributed towards the success or victory recorded by the rebels. This is because; as soon as NATO intervened, it imposed and enforced a no-fly zone

over Libyan airspace, banning aerial bombardment by the Gaddafi forces on protesters and rebels and simultaneously carrying out airstrikes on Gaddafi's strategic military sites, thus weakening his forces' military capability to strike further. This was to the advantage of the rebels who quickly capitalised on this and continued to strike until they finally captured, killed and toppled Gaddafi and his regime from power, which spanned a period of 42 years (1969-2011) on 20th October, 2011 (Pack, 2013).

Further research could be undertaken on the fallacy of the NATO humanitarian intervention in Libya and on the type of political leadership that best fits Libya, given the fact that Libya is in ruins today, as a result of the toppling and killing of its political father and leader, Muammar Gaddafi.

The limitations of the research were: inaccessibility to classified NATO data on the actual motive for its intervention in Libya, the insecurity in Libya, which made it impossible for physical primary data collection from Libyans living in Libya and limited time.

Recommendations

The Paper recommends that there has to be a truly independent and impartial Global Authority to check the excesses of the so-called superpowers and protect the weaker states in the event of any interference in their internal affairs. In other words, the UN is incompetent; there has to be an impartial and efficient global military platform or umbrella to enforce UN resolutions, especially those requiring military action; there is the need for Arab countries, especially those on the African continent to embrace and popularize the ideals of popular democracy; oppressed citizens of a given state should always strive to adopt a non-violent means of resistance, given the destruction the violent means causes; the United Nations should be overhauled and strengthened for the common good of all states and peoples throughout the world and the United Nations should desist from passing resolutions, such as 1970 and 1973, ordering military intervention; when all other options have not been exhausted for a peaceful and amicable settlement or resolution of any conflict or uprising around the world.

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