
AFRICAN ISSUES

THE FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION AND THE ARAB SPRING IN MODERN LIBYA

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This paper examines the influence of globalization on Arab Uprising in Libya in the twenty-first century. It would be recalled that Tunisia blazed the trail in the Arab Spring before it diffused to other Arabian countries where it was observed. The manner, in which the unrest unfolded in Libya, was not radically different from the general Arab Spring which also occurred in places like Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco. The events of the uprising put Arab identification differently on the political map in human history. The Arab uprising demonstrates popular revolts against authoritarian governments, calling for more open, accountable, and representative systems. In this article particular reference is given to Libya due to its peculiarity and concerns which Libya received from the West; the personality of Muammar Gaddafi, his despotic rule and his anti-Western stand make the Spring in Libya more dramatic. Popular access to a shared source of news and information, located within a common cultural context, enabled the spirit of resistance to spread from one Arab country to another. The paper concludes that the Libyan Revolution has irrevocably transformed Libya. The forces of globalization, arguably, though, did not cause the conflict, but rather played active role in the crisis with both local and global factors intertwining with global economic interests in modern Libya.

Keywords: Arab spring, globalization, modern Libya, revolution, resistance.

Introduction

The Arab uprisings have put Arab identification back on the political map. The events in one Arab country clearly had a major impact on developments in others. Unrest and resistance in one country triggered similar phenomena in the others. The experience showed that the Arab world constitutes a common ideational space with information and opinion resting in a shared cultural pool. Satellite television channels (especially Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya) have played a key role in creating the contemporary articulation and vitality of this cultural pool. For instance, Arab populations currently watch the same television, absorb the same news and views, and relate to the reported developments as integral to their domestic experience and environment. State oppression in one country, therefore, creates echoes and vibrations across the region.

The external commentators have highlighted the use, which the demonstrators have made of Twitter and other social networking sites. No doubt, these were of significance in mobilizing people for specific demonstrations, but satellite television was

more important. Popular access to a shared source of news and information, located within a common cultural context, enabled the spirit of resistance to spread (Niblock 2012).

At the start the Arab uprisings appeared to be shaped in a similar pattern: popular revolts against authoritarian governments, calling for more open, accountable, and representative systems. The manner in which the unrest in one state triggered off the unrest in others added to this sense of commonality. In practice, however, the manner in which popular frustration with government impinges on individual states, and the likely outcome of the unrest, varies considerably from one state to another (Niblock 2012).

One should recall that the events in Tunisia and Egypt jolted the rest of the region. A few days after Mubarak's fall, protests against Muammar Gaddafi broke out in Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, and quickly spread across the whole of the east and to some parts of the west, although they remained relatively small-scale in the capital, Tripoli. The rebellion was led by the National Transition Council (NTC). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (henceforth, NATO), illegal military intervention from March 19, 2011 did not only receive international condemnation; it actually hardened the attitude of some pro-regime loyalists as it boded well for the anti-regime protesters. One should note that the UN Security Council had mandated instituting a No-fly Zone in Libya and mandated NATO in concert with other Arabian countries like Qatar and United Arab Emirates to protect civilians (Anonymous 2015). However, NATO seized the opportunity to bombard the stronghold of Gaddafi and thus, launched the escalation of the conflict in Libya. Indeed, it is a moot question whether NATO's intervention helped to tinder the Libyan crisis. This is imperative to note considering the heavy casualties of civilians and the general aftermath of NATO's intervention. According to Iyi (2012) '...analysts put (the casualties) at over 3,500 military deaths and 200 civilian deaths all resulting from NATO air strikes.' Put differently, 'what the so-called revolution was to deliver to Libyans was "true democracy".' According to the triumvirate imperial powers under the aegis of NATO that invaded and helped in the killing of Gaddafi. However, democracy was never installed in Libya as the country continues to witness conflict and crises. The Arab Spring through its Libyan episode contributed to the unprecedented proliferation of weapons into Mali Nigeria, Kenya and Syria. For instance, the Boko Haram menace in Nigeria feeds directly from the aftermath of the proliferation of weapons from Libyan armories into these territories (Wafawarova 2014). Indeed, the ripple effects of the Libyan revolution have been devastating since the demise of Gaddafi. At the peak of the conflict however, by early September 2011, after months of apparent deadlock and war, which cost tens of thousands of lives, Gaddafi's regime imploded and he himself was brutally killed on October, 20.

The forces of globalization played active role in the Libyan crisis and most noticeable were the unprecedentedly widespread use of social media and other means of communication, which made the rebellions possible and increased the strength and inclusiveness of the freedom fighters. Grievances were channeled into collective action and the media helped the revolts to spread across borders bringing people out onto the streets. The Qatari-based Al-Jazeera satellite channel continued to air reports on protests in Egypt and Tunisia despite the regimes' pleas to the Qatari government to stop it.

By the same token, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and of course mobile phones, were widely used to organize the revolts and link the protesters to each other and the outside world. Perhaps more crucially, media played a role in preparing for the rebellions over a number of years and even decades, by facilitating the circulation of ideas in national and global spaces and challenging state monopolies of information. The contagious nature of the uprisings that started in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to a number of other Arab states, including Libya helped by these media (among other factors), is confirmation that the component parts of the Arab World are not only linked by strong internal bonds, but inextricably intertwined with the forces of globalization (Dalacoura 2012).

It is clear the Arab Spring was not a unified revolution but a series of national uprisings in response to regional intra-national socio-economic grievances. The uprisings were not necessarily or predominantly a product of globalization itself but a manifestation of the resulting rise in inequalities mishandled by sovereign powers. However, its remote causes can still be attributed to globalization especially in the areas of spread of ideas such as modern democracy and human rights.

Historical Background of the Libyan Revolution

Libya achieved its independence in tandem with the announcement of the Constitution of 1951. The country, which adopted the name The United Kingdom of Libya, had a federal system comprising three provinces: Tripoli, Burqa, and Fazan. In 1963, the Constitution was amended and the federal system terminated, turning Libya into a unified country under the new name, The Kingdom of Libya. In September 1969, Gaddafi came to power through a military coup, an event he insisted on calling a revolution. He suspended the Constitution and disbanded parliament, leaving Libya with neither a constitution nor a parliament for the entire period of his rule. In 1972, Gaddafi forbade political parties under the penalty of death for those who defied the order. In 1975, he published his 'Green Book' through which he ruled Libya and managed all social, political, and economic activities in the country. In 1977, he announced the establishment of the so-called 'People's Sovereignty' and renamed the country the 'Libyan Jamahiriya.' In 2003, the regime launched a slow political reform process (the Libya of tomorrow) guided and managed by Gaddafi's son Seif al-Islam. The process elicited a series of reactions from the Libyan people, and this, coupled with political and military resistance activities, eventually culminated in the February 17, 2011 Revolution that brought down Gaddafi and his regime. The Revolution elevated Libya to an entirely new stage in its history; it began a new wave of crises and conflict (Grifa 2012).

The Libyan Revolution started in a fashion similar to the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions. It began with the mobilisation of large crowds via the internet, social media sites, tribal communication avenues and peaceful demonstrations calling for political and constitutional reform. The Revolution ignited on February 16, 17 and 18, 2011, first in Benghazi, Al-Beida, most eastern cities and in Zintan in the west. Gaddafi's defiant attitude to the Arab Spring revolutions gave the Libyan Revolution a character of its own, namely that of an armed popular revolution aimed at removing Muammar Gaddafi from power (*Ibid.*).

Descent into Chaos

Gaddafi's system of control was coated with large welfare programs to buy loyalty, and this drove Libya into economic distress and failed to reap the benefits of oil endowments. Regardless, Gaddafi remained unrepentant throughout his 42 years in power in his domestic and foreign policy for Libya, obtaining unfriendly relations from Africa and the Arab League and leaving his agenda unresponsive to popular will. As the Arab Spring swept closer to Libya, Gaddafi condemned the protests, extending his usual rhetoric of dissenters as 'stray dogs,' 'rats' and 'cockroaches' that must be exterminated. As the National Transition Council's anti-regime protests expanded, Gaddafi's response was to assume the defensive, rallying supporters and refusing to cede control at any price. This defensive posturing remained unchanged throughout the conflict as he rejected the UN sanction of his actions, denied human rights abuses, and deployed security forces for violent scorched earth policies to rout out dissent. Thus, Gaddafi's repression, isolation from reality, and unwillingness to change enhanced the grievance of the Libyan people and triggered backlash of violent and unwavering attacks. The crackdowns provided the underlying grievances for uprisings and then acted as the proximate cause for NTC militarization by increasing its platform strength. Harsh responses both incited conflict and attracted larger popular support, widening protests into violent rejection of Gaddafi with no possibility of compromise. Regime extremism thus solidified the bloody nature of conflict by forcing the NTC's hand and preventing negotiations, thereby making civil war largely inevitable (Bhardwaj 2012).

The Arab Spring in Libya began shortly after the fall of Tunisian ex-President Ben Ali on February 14, 2011 after 23 years in power. While the people celebrated, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi expressed regret about the regime change in Tunisia, saying 'there was no one better' than Ben Ali. The social revolution of the Arab Spring soon spread to Libya (Dunne and Gifkins 2011).

The uprising is believed to have begun in Benghazi, a major Libyan economic center, on February 15, after protesters assembled outside city police headquarters to protest the detention of human rights activist Fethi Tarbel. The protest soon turned into a riot and by February 17, activists had labeled the day, a Day of Rage. Violence escalated rapidly. Soon protesters were using looted bulldozers loaded with dynamite used for fishing to enter armories, and protests were reported across the country, including in Tripoli.

Various defections of high-ranking government officials soon followed, and in several cities such as Benghazi, Tobruk, and Misurata anti-government militias took control. After a brief period, government forces soon recovered. On February 22, Gaddafi issued a televised broadcast, ordering his forces to crush the uprising. Government forces utilized heavy equipment including armor, air and artillery assets to confront opposition forces, and the use of foreign mercenaries was widely reported (Vira and Cordesman 2011).

Heavy fighting was reported in several coastal cities and by early March, rebel momentum was broken at Ras Lanuf, where loyalist forces retook the city on March 10, after a week of heavy fighting. Loyalist ground forces registered a rapid advance to Benghazi, the opposition stronghold, and home to the National Transitional Council, the self-appointed opposition leadership council. On March 17, an emergency session of the UN Security Council approved Security Council Resolution 1973, approving the implementa-

tion of a no-fly zone over Libya and authorizing all necessary measures to protect civilians. Within two days, airstrikes struck the Libyan air defense network, various military installations around the country, and halted the loyalist ground advance on Benghazi. The US operations were conducted under the code name Operation Odyssey Dawn; French participation was Operation Harmattan, the British Operation ELLAMY and the Canadian Operation Mobile (*Ibid.*).

NATO took official control of all military operations on March 31, 2011, under the name of Operation Unified Protector and by June 15, had flown over 11,107 sorties including 4,212 strike sorties. Despite NATO intervention, Gaddafi forces continued to mount stiff resistance, and in particular continued to siege the city of Misurata. Strategically and symbolically vital, the city constituted the only major opposition outpost in the western half of the country, and lent credence to opposition claims that the resistance is a national popular uprising, and not an eastern separatist movement (Vira and Cordesman 2011).

The Libyan Revolution was deeply rooted in territorial divisions, pairing Libya into rebel controlled and loyalists controlled cities. From Benghazi the NTC extended its control to incorporate other tribal and rural areas. This exploitation of tribal versus Gaddafi's Tripoli allowed the NTC to mobilize forces nationwide (Bhardwaj 2012). Historically, tribal groupings have remained important in the Libyan political and social life and have played out alternatively as conflict drivers for example Zintan, the second most important revolutionary power comprising Arabs and Amazigh towns was interested in upholding revolutionary goals majorly as a means of reversing its underdevelopment. Also, Zitani leaders wished to secure the city's predominance over the parts of the south-west.

Ethnicity has often been part of conflict dynamics. The major ethnic group in Libya is the Arab. However, the Amazigh, Tuareg, and Tebu are equally significantly important. All of these groups had one or more contentious issues to settle during the Libyan uprising. The Amazigh, which had been impoverished, were denied the right to speak their own language and denied other cultural rights. The south of Libya is underdeveloped and discriminated against. For example, the black population of the Tebu struggled significantly to obtain Libyan citizenship. Although, many of them later got their citizenship and recruited into Gaddafi's army, the Tebu and the Touareg resented the Gaddafi regime because local rulers in the south were 'commonly' Arab, and during the Gaddafi regime neither tribe had the right to speak their own language or express their culture. In all, both the opposition and the pro-Gaddafi forces actively pursued the allegiance of these key tribes during the 2011 Revolution to achieve their goals (Tempelhof and Omar 2015).

Beyond general differences, between the three main regions, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fezzan, local communities had been fundamental actors. The most prominent pro-revolution group included Misrata, Zintan, and Alzawiyah in the north-west and Benghazi in the north-east. Tripoli has comprised of a mix of pro- and anti-revolution communities (Combaz 2015).

The Forces of Globalization in the Libyan Crisis

For the purpose of this essay, globalization will be evaluated as the process whereby 'in many different fields, the world is drawing together as a single society, marked by common institutions and organizations, by a shared culture and consciousness' (Lechner and Boli 2005: 15). Within this trajectory, therefore, this article examines the effects of increased globalism by scrutinizing the wider context of the Libyan Revolution of 2011, both within and beyond the country to locate the effects of globalization on economic, political, cultural and democratic platforms. The protests were not fueled by ideology but were driven by socio-economic grievances and political frustrations. This argument is worthwhile owing to the fact that the Arab Spring was not a unified revolution but a series of national uprisings in response to regional, intra-national socio-economic grievances. Six Arab countries: Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Libya, Bahrain, and Yemen, have experienced various levels of critical unrest, which for many continues to this day.

For some analysts the revolution was part of wider global protests which marked 2011 'the year of indignation' (Harris 2011). The Arab Spring erupted alongside unrest across Europe and the global north: with protests throughout Greece, Italy, and Spain canvassing against harsh austerity measures and campaigns in Israel targeting inflated living costs. Demonstrations and protests were also active across the global south demanding an increase in social spending in Chile and an end to corruption in India (*Ibid.*).

Goldstone (2011) has argued that statist authoritarian regimes curtailed levels of global integration to protect the region from the perceived threats of globalization such as the erosion of state sovereignty. The benefits of globalization therefore bypassed the wider population, reinforcing elite networks and the personalization of power and thus failing to encourage greater equity. Sultanistic dictators, such as Mubarak, Gaddafi and their Arab friends arranged national agendas around a personal consolidation of power, ensuring that the mass population remained depoliticized, disorganized, and ineffectual. Therefore, according to Dalacoura (2012) 'more than anything else, the rebellions were a call for dignity and a reaction to being humiliated by arbitrary, unaccountable and increasingly predatory tyrannies.' Statistics demonstrate that economic globalization has benefited Libya, Egypt and Tunisia with significant and sustained growth. However, globally replicated issues of uneven development and wealth distribution were evident; these are exacerbated by the opportunist corruption of the political elite. These products of globalization, along with food price rises and the economic crisis, undoubtedly contributed to causing the revolts (Haughton 2012).

Globalization failed to fulfill its inflated expectations as elites ensured that its benefits remained tightly within their grasp. It is important to note that corruption and cronyism may be products of globalization, they manifest to the entrenchment of illiberal political structures, adverse to both liberalism and equity. These long-standing socio-economic conditions catalysed by a peripheral incorporation into globalized structures laid the seeds of political activism (Moore 2012). Put differently, globalization itself had a major role in fueling the Arab Spring. Media coverage, social networks, and Wikileaks contributed massively to spread the 'anger' around 'the country' or 'the region' (Rozoff 2012).

Influence of Social Media

Despite the fact that globalization has negative effects, it has positive effects as well. Education and access to information are some of those effects. In fact, one of the most striking features of globalization is globalizing information and education by using the highest information technologies. Consequently, in Libya, the educational system has been influenced by the international educational systems. All kind of information is easily accessed by using the Internet because the Internet itself is a global phenomenon. In Libya, as in most countries with bad governments, the positive effects are on both education and access to information. Every part of the globe is a beneficiary of the Internet, the harbinger of the social media, satellite television and even mobile phones via internet calls. All these serve as veritable tools for sending and accessing information easily and very quickly.

Much has been made of social media's leading role in the Arab revolution. Despite the hype, it emerged as an important tool for exchanging ideas, organizing meetings and accessing information. Although only few Libyans are online, the country's emergent social media scene is burgeoning. As of April 2011, according to Mourtada and Fadi (2011), there were 71,840 Libyans on Facebook while another 64,000 are using Twitter. Gaddafi first impeded access to reliable news in Libya (*Ibid.*). Twitter soon found its niche as a major and speedy source and overtook the telephone as a way to rapidly convey news during the early clashes with Gaddafi's forces. Information was exchanged rapidly on this network. All of a sudden, radio, newspapers, and TV homed in on the newsflashes and traditional news-breakers like Reuters and the associated press was left to play catch up. Some of the major twitter feeds which provided fast news on Libyan Revolution, a time when information was in short supply were Libya 4life, Live to Tripoli Libya TV, Libyafeb17.com freebenghazi, *etc.* (Richani 2012).

Moreover, whilst there are fears about terrorist groups and general criminals using social media to mobilize their organizations, we have to look at the many positives it has brought such as freedom of speech, and how it has been a vehicle for democracy across the Middle East. There are numerous examples of ingenuity as fighters have been reported to be using Google Earth to map coordinates for their weapons systems and Skype to communicate and opposition supporters have been known to post coordinates of loyalist forces on social networking sites such as Twitter to assist NATO targeting. A Libyan-American telecom executive for example helped fighters hijack Gaddafi's communications network and re-establish the phone and internet network (Vira and Cordesman 2011). Moore (2012) summed the whole scenario as the impact of cultural globalization in the Middle East, which also affected regional and inter-regional communications through increased technological and communication transfers. Instruments such digital television channels, most notably Al-Jazeera, and Internet fora such as social networking sites Facebook and Twitter have been highlighted as progressive means for national mobilization. She contends that it is clear that the utilization of social media is illustrative of the effects of globalization on the Middle East region. However, it is important not to overstate their impact. The Internet and digital television broadcasts provided a significant platform for the coordination and mobilization of protestors, but these fora acted alongside traditional means of association, rather than replacing them. The use of Twitter and Facebook challenged the monopolies of state-

controlled information and brought the uprisings into the living rooms of social media users across the world. In Libya, only 5 percent of the population has access to the Internet, access to which was also blocked periodically by state apparatus.

Despite the restrictions of the protest on television, the Libyans used social media to publish the first video footage of the revolution. The video was posted on YouTube by a Libyan protestor and shows images of people, young and old, fighting verbally and physically. Through Facebook, Libyan journalist Mahmud Shammam rallied over 200 people to join in overcoming the false information and video restrictions by creating a satellite channel named Libya TV. After calling for volunteers on his Facebook page, a team quickly assembled to create the station. Their goal was to provide news and commentary while countering Libyan state propaganda (Haughton 2012).

Influence of the Libyan Diaspora

Diaspora communities have traditionally taken on many international development roles in their countries of origin through remittances, forming charitable organizations and aid agencies, advocacy and activism, economic investment, humanitarian support in the aftermath of crisis and good-governance building. Nowhere more is there evidence of this level of commitment to development as from within the Diaspora. Through the advent of global internet access, viral social media and omnipresent mobile telephony the diaspora's development goals and their impact have been significantly amplified. Never before have the diaspora been so empowered to lend support to kith and kin at 'home'. During the crisis in Libya, the Libyan Diaspora mobilized to harness social media for one of the most profoundly effective social media campaigns ever. The ramifications from this campaign were widespread and can be considered as a significant contribution to the ultimate outcome of liberation in Libya (Anonymous 2012).

Whilst the Internet and mobile phone services were entirely shut-down by the Gaddafi regime, the young rebel members of diaspora were coordinating their efforts between Europe and the USA to get information in and out of Libya about what was going on there. One of the major diaspora's efforts, the Libyan Youth Movement, had over 15,000 followers on Twitter at the end of the war and their tweets were covered by major news providers across the world such as the BBC and Al Jazeera. The Independent media outlet Libya Alhurra was also incredibly important for providing visual coverage from within Libya; they worked closely with those outside to help formulate a clearer picture of the crisis as it unfolded. The coordination efforts of the diaspora helped to provide vital information for decision making as high up as the UN Security Council (*Ibid.*). It is harder to ignore the influence of the diaspora in conjunction with 24-hour news media. It was noticeable that characteristics of globalization, communication networks and migration, circumvented the efforts of the dictator to close down information leaving the country. Daily updates through the diaspora were being broadcast as a polemic to the state generated propaganda: the reliability of the diaspora reports, according to Haughton, is hard to verify and clearly they carried a biased agenda designed to help their loved ones. The extent to which these reports inaccurately shaped public consensus in the West, particularly in regards to Libya, would be an interesting area of research (Haughton 2012).

A large number of Libyans from the diaspora communities in Europe, North America, and the Gulf countries came to Benghazi. Some assisted the council through advice. Others focused on creating media outlets and fighting on the front lines. Many in the Libyan diaspora remained engaged from outside the borders of Libya, with both sides of the conflict benefiting from this external source of financial and operational support. Although, public grievances against the involvement of diaspora communities and the desire to have more local Libyans in the NTC led to extensive reshuffling of Council positions. The Libyans in the diaspora played visibly commendable part from different parts of the world, particularly from the USA, Canada, and Europe. As in many conflict and post-conflict situations, diaspora members are often well-educated and able to provide technical expertise during a transition phase (Tarkowski and Omar 2012).

Regional Factor

Gaddafi's isolation from reality was also highly causal in Libyan Civil War by motivating regional players to cast their favor for the NTC. As Gaddafi was already a pariah in the Arab and African world due to his support of despots, bizarre foreign policy, and general disrepute, regional nations did not have to consider a delicate balance of power in supporting the NTC. Instead, the framework of the Arab Spring allowed regional leaders like Jordan's King Abdullah and Tunisia and Egypt's interim governments to support liberalization with little political risk. Additionally, Libya's geographical location in the Maghreb, balanced between the Middle East and Africa, allowed more removed Gulf nations like Qatar to donate troops and arms to the NTC, and caused regional organizations like the Arab League to unanimously condemn the regime and encourage international intervention. Gaddafi's ostracism in the regional community did not only provide the causal mechanism for civil war by privileging neighboring military and political support of the NTC: it also meant that there were no alliances to be lost or harsh perceptions to incur if loyalist reprisals were especially harsh, thereby eliminating political costs of harsh backlash. Thus, Libyan isolation reduced fears of civil war spill-over, and caused regional players to support the NTC both politically under the framework of the Arab Spring as well as militarily through arms flow and troops. The combined political and military regional influence increased violent clashes between loyalist and opposition forces and heightened the conflict into defined civil war (Bhardwaj 2012; Dunne and Gifkins 2011).

Foreign Intervention

The international response to the crisis in Libya has been remarkably quick and decisive. Where many other cases of mass atrocity crimes have failed to generate sufficient and timely political will to protect civilians at risk, the early response to Libya in 2011 has shown that the United Nations Security Council is able to give effect to the 'responsibility to protect' norm (Dunne and Gifkins 2011). International intervention in the Libyan Revolution can be explained from different standpoints. The fact that it borders on the Mediterranean and gives rise to the possibility of major migration flows to Europe, should there be a long protracted conflict there, and more importantly, it sits atop energy sources that would destabilize energy markets. These very important considerations frankly have to be conceded as primary motivations. It is instructive to understand that foreign

intervention was not a bad idea. However, the intentions behind these interventions need to be thoroughly understood. In other words, one has to be clear-eyed about why foreign powers were ready to intervene in Libya and were not, on the other hand, prepared to intervene in Bahrain and Yemen at least they are not very far away from Libya and the *raison d'être* for uprising were similar to those of Libya (Chomsky 2012).

Many questions why the West is intervening in Libya militarily while other countries such as Bahrain or Yemen or Ivory Coast (with perhaps as many if not more killed in violence) are not getting such attention. It would be naïve to claim that foreign intervention is prompted by the Western leaders' concern about protecting civilian lives. The United States, Great Britain, and France have each allied with governments such as Guatemala, Indonesia, Colombia, and Zaire, which, in recent decades, have engaged in the slaughter of civilians as bad or worse as had been occurring in Libya. The Rwandan genocide of 1994 could have been mitigated had the West and United Nations intervened the way and manner Libya was being attended to.

Libya is not like Egypt. Its leader, Muammar Gaddafi, has not been an imperialist puppet like Hosni Mubarak. Gaddafi was always anti-western. On assuming power in 1969 through a military coup, he nationalized Libya's oil and used much of that money to develop the Libyan economy. People's living conditions improved dramatically. Perhaps for that, the imperialists were determined to grind Libya down. Due to his anti-West stance, devastating sanctions were imposed by both the USA and the UN to make him pay for some of his atrocities, including the Lockerbie bombing of 1988. Gaddafi tried to ward off further threatened aggression on Libya by making big political and economic concessions to the imperialists. He opened the economy to foreign banks and corporations; he agreed to IMF demands for 'structural adjustment,' privatizing many state-owned enterprises and cutting state subsidies on necessities like food and fuel. The Libyan people are suffering from the same high prices and unemployment that underlie the rebellions elsewhere and that flow from the worldwide capitalist economic crisis (Flounders 2012). There can be no doubt that the struggle sweeping the Arab world for political freedom and economic justice has also struck a chord in Libya. There can be no doubt that discontent with the Gaddafi regime is motivating a significant section of the population. However, it has to be borne in mind that the intervention of the West in the Libyan crisis was not motivated by humanitarian reasons but a means to get rid of a common enemy – Gaddafi. Libya is rich in oil, and though the US and UK had often given quite remarkable support to its cruel dictator, even before his inglorious exit, they would much prefer a more obedient client (Chomsky 2012). Furthermore, the vast territory of Libya is mostly unexplored, and oil specialists believe it may have rich untapped resources, which a more dependable government might open to Western exploitation.

Conclusion

The Libyan Revolution has irrevocably transformed Libya. Indeed, it has given the country an image that has never been envisaged. The forces of globalization, arguably, though, did not cause the conflict, played an active role in the crisis with both local and global factors intertwining with global economic interests to obliterate Gaddafi's Libya. In practical terms, the impact of the social media, Libyans in the diaspora and ultimately international influence through multiple mechanisms are hard to ignore in the Libyan civil war.

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