

The US-Russian Stand-off in Libya

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Libya has not recovered from the US-NATO attack in 2011, the so-called 'Arab Spring', which burnt throughout the Middle East and North Africa like a wildfire having been lit in Washington, DC under the US President Obama administration.

There is a ceasefire between the two sides headquartered in Tripoli and Benghazi, but a permanent peace with economic prosperity remains elusive. Russia and the US are both in Libya, but have very different goals and methods of operation.

On one side, there is a UN brokered Government of National Unity (GNU), and on the other side there is the Libyan National Army (LNA) commanded by Khalifa Haftar.

The GNU are western supported, but the members of this group are followers of Radical Islam, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). This was the same political ideology used by Obama when he crafted the 'Arab Spring'. The MB are based across the US and Europe, and have an identical platform as ISIS or Al Qaeda. They believe that Islamic Law is the best governance system on earth.

US Senator Ted Cruz has authored legislation to outlaw the MB in the US, but has been unsuccessful while both Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill have resisted, which demonstrates the level of power the MB exert in the US.

Egypt, Syria, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have all outlawed the MB.

Haftar's LNA is secular, and opposed to creating a political system in Libya based on Islam. This would seem to be the perfect partner for the US and Europe; however, it is the MB which has been supported and weaponized by the US, UK, and France during the Arab Spring, as the MB were used as 'boots on the ground'.

Libya has an abundance of energy resources, and yet the government and people are not benefitting. Foreign meddling in Libya was started by Obama and French President Sarkozy who used NATO airstrikes to overthrow the government and destroy vital infrastructure. Since then, Turkey, Egypt, and Russia have all stepped into Libya after the door was left ajar by the US-NATO attack.

America is still very much present in Libya, as they have oil and security interests there. However, Washington has never invested in Libyan economic recovery, and without a plan to rebuild and restore the country, the US is seen as just a greedy super-power looking for their own benefit.

During the American occupation of Libya, tons of gold in the central bank of Libya went missing, as well as the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton absconded with the Libyan government's weapons stockpiles, which were shipped from Benghazi to Turkey to be trucked across the border to Idlib, for the use by Al Qaeda terrorists as they attacked Syrian civilians and Syrian soldiers.

US has not paid Libya back for the theft of national resources while under occupation.

Now, many in Libya want foreign meddlers to go home, and an economic recovery which can support the rule of law and elections.

The dictator Gaddafi had ruled with an iron fist, but the country was united and prosperous. Syrian workers had been in Libya for decades, making a decent living wage, while working as doctors, teachers, and engineers. Libyans hired foreign workers to perform menial jobs, like trash collection and restaurant work. The Libyan citizens lived a lifestyle above and beyond that of most Middle Eastern citizens. They might not have had 'freedom and democracy' but they generally owned their own home and could afford to send their children to school.

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of the former ousted leader, has expressed an interest in running for office, but the US is intent to deliver him to the International Criminal Court on charges against him stemming from the time of the 'Arab Spring'.

When the terrorists began attacking civilians and government institutions in 2011 in Libya, Muamar Gaddafi correctly identified the terrorists as members of Al Qaeda, but the western media, instructed by their governments, spun the story as 'freedom fighters' and a 'grass-roots' uprising to oust the dictator Gaddafi.

The same wildfire of terrorism swept through Syria, Egypt and Tunisia. Only Syria was able to resist the [US-NATO attack](#), due to their national army never breaking up, and never backing down. When it became weakened by years of losses, the Russian military stepped in to save the country from an Islamic State in Damascus.

Both Egypt and Tunisia succumbed to the Obama plan, but later both self-corrected and threw out the MB leadership which had oppressed the people as much as any dictator had.

Russia has a presence in Libya, and is there as a counter-balance to the US and Europe. The west should pay attention to what Russia offers Libya, which is economic benefits, without lecturing them about democracy being their priority. According to the Libyan people, their priority is feeding their children and families.

“We appeal to our friends in the Russian leadership and our friends in African countries to help us withdraw all foreign troops from our territory.” —Libyan Presidential Council Chairman Mohamed al-Menfi, at the [2nd Russia-Africa summit](#) in St. Petersburg, addressing Russian President Vladimir Putin in July 2023, with the participation of 49 African countries.

Menfi stressed the desire to establish a successful strategic partnership with a direct return to African integration and mutual interest for both Africa and Russia.

“This partnership will be demonstrated in the areas of technology transfer, scientific research, cadre’s capacity building, energy and agriculture,” Menfi explained.

“The partnership will support efforts of the African group to improve its negotiating position in fields of mining and investments, and to obtain its right to fair and equitable representation in the Security Council,” he further stated.

“We will be keen to support all efforts for economic integration, and what will be agreed with Russia in several fields, and in efforts to strengthen Peace and defuse armed conflicts,” Menfi added.

The US imports less goods from Libya today that it did prior to the ‘Arab Spring’, and the US goods deficit with Libya was \$1.9 billion in 2022, which is a \$40 million increase over 2021.

The US sells a lot more to Libya than it buys from Libya, keeping Libya a permanent customer without equality. The US gave Libya about \$49 million in aid in 2022, with the aid being conditioned to programs supporting democracy, but not economic development.

No wonder why the Libyans are happy to partner with Russia, and have said in the past “Yankee Go Home”. It is all about the economy and development in Libya. Washington should take a lesson from Russia on how to make friends and influence people.

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