LIBYA'S FOREIGN POLICY: DRIVERS AND OBJECTIVES

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Cover photo: Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (left) shakes hands with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi (right) during a signing agreement in Benghazi, Libya, August 30, 2008. © Sabri Elmhedwhi/epa/Corbis

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George Joffé[1] and Emanuela Paoletti[2]

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Executive Summary

The policy process in Libya is complex and intensely personalized around the figure of the Libyan leader, even if it also relies on a structured consultation process as well. Libya's foreign policy fits within this paradigm as well, as our research among Libyan policymakers has demonstrated. Actual relations form four interconnected conceptual circles covering the Arab world, Africa, the West (Europe and America) and the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China, etc.). Thus relations with the Arab world and Africa are suffused with ideological import, alongside Libya's pragmatic objectives in Africa, while with Europe and America they are conditioned by pragmatic loyalty based on oil and international acceptance. With the world of the BRICs, some of Libya's old visions of anti-imperialism have resurfaced but commercial concerns still dominate interrelationships. Overall, however, the constant and underlying theme since the 1990s has been regaining international acceptance, one which, even if its content is diametrically opposed to the patterns of that past, reflects the objectives of the 1970s and 1980s as well. And, in this mix, relations with the United States are now dominant, in the wake of the renewal of diplomatic links after many years of Libyan isolation.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent months, Libya has imposed itself forcefully on American and European awareness of the wider world. The return of Abdelbasset al-Maghrahi, the convicted Lockerbie bomber, to Libya on compassionate grounds because of his terminal illness occasioned an angry torrent of comment, particularly in the United States. The anger had been heightened by Libyan comment that Mr. al-Maghrahi's release was a tacit acknowledgement that he had not been guilty of the bombing of PA103 over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in December 1988, with the loss of 270 lives, and suggestions that Libyan diplomatic displeasure was now a force to be reckoned with in global politics. Then Colonel Qadhafi, the Libyan leader, made his first visit to the United Nations in New York and, in a rambling speech to the General Assembly, bewildered and infuriated his audience as he strove to demonstrate his credentials as a global statesman. There had earlier been similarly bizarre visits to Paris and Rome, the latter setting the seal upon a treaty of friendship designed to bring Italy's colonial experience in Libya to an end.

These events prompt the question of whether Libya has really reformed its foreign policy process and its diplomatic objectives, as would befit a former "pariah state" now readmitted to the international community. After all, Libya had been characterized in the past, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, by its radical truculence toward the United States and Europe, and its endorsement of anti-imperialism as well as, in the eyes of Western commentators and statesmen, of terrorist violence. Libya had, it was true, complied with United Nations demands over the Lockerbie

bombings in 1997 and had subsequently renounced terrorism and compensated the victims of the Lockerbie and Niger bombings in order to repair its relations with the United States. The Arab world, too, had been lectured about Arab unity and its duties toward the Palestinians, an attitude also directed toward Africa after 1997 and Libya's declared disappointment with its Arab brothers.

Doubts still remain, however, as to what degree this apparent conversion to international cooperation and conformity with international principle, law, and practice is real. After all, there has been no change in the principles upon which the Libyan state is based or in the personnel who continue to manage its destiny, even if its international behavior has apparently altered. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate this conundrum by analyzing the drivers behind Libya's foreign policy and the mechanisms by which it is articulated. We argue that the foreign policy process there cannot be understood unless its intellectual and ideological assumptions are appreciated. We also consider that the unique political system under which Libya operates also influences the foreign policy process, as do the institutions and the interactions between the individuals who articulate it. Only then can the current manifestations of foreign policy be appropriately understood.

2 ACTORS IN POLICY

Libya has long appeared to be an oddity within the contemporary world of nation-states for it denies its identity as a state and sees its national identity as stretching far beyond its geographic frontiers. Its governance purports to be based on direct popular democracy in which all Libyans supposedly freely collaborate, yet their collaboration, as well as their social and political circumstances are ultimately conditioned by the collectivist principles of the Popular Social Leadership and the activist and coercive techniques of the Revolutionary Committee Movement. Yet, despite its universal ambitions, this system of governance is the product of a single mind, aided by a small circle of confidents and advisors. It is, then, hardly surprisingly that Libya's external policies are dominated by the impression that they also are the product of one man, the Libyan leader with no formal role inside the Libyan state despite his responsibility and engagement in its creation, Colonel Mu'ammar Qadhafi.

It is the contention of this analysis that this impression is in large measure correct. However, although Colonel Qadhafi has long played a dominant role in policy formulation, both domestic and external, he also operates within a structured environment that has its effects on the development and articulation of foreign policy. This structured environment itself is complex for it comprises both formal and informal elements. It must, therefore, be analyzed alongside and integrated with the personalized dimension of policy formation in Libya. The actual decision-making process, furthermore, also reflects the complexity of a country where inputs into

decisions are both pragmatic and ideological in nature. In addition, the balance between these two components, in any decision, depends on the specifics of the situation for which it is designed. But this is not to suggest that policy formulation in any country does not contain such an intermixture of different elements ranging from the practical to the theoretical.

Libya is, however, virtually unique today in that this complexity is not distilled into policy simply by bureaucratic elites but is ultimately essentially consonant with the ideas and principles of the Libyan leader himself as mediated through elite structures. Of course, other regimes, such as those in Cuba and Venezuela, are dominated by charismatic personalities[1] who personally determine policy despite the institutional frameworks through which they should be mediated. What is extraordinary about Libya, and what probably makes it unique, is the way in which the Libyan leader has established a complete hegemony over the political scene, partly by longevity and partly through charisma so that in a very real sense he "embodies" the political process in Libya despite the mediatory functions of the bureaucracy that resonates to his views. There is little doubt that Libya's nature as a rentier state and as

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[1] "The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader." See Weber, M. (1947) (trans: Parsons T. & Henderson A.M.), *Theory of social and economic organization*, The Free Press (New York), p. 358.

a neo-patrimonial state[2] also helps to emphasize the leader's hegemonic role, alongside his personal understanding of the nature of the political and diplomatic process.

This implies that, to understand the import and origins of any specific policy, particularly in the field of foreign affairs, both the structural components through which the actual policy is processed and the intellectual insights that applied to its formulation must be integrated with the objective circumstances in which the policy is to be applied. There is a further factor, too, that plays into this formulation process. This is that, despite the major reversal of objectives of Libyan foreign policy that occurred after the American bombings of Tripoli and Benghazi in 1987,[3] the assumptions upon which the policy is based have remained virtually unchanged since the *jamahiri*[4]

political system was introduced in 1973. This study therefore examines the norms and the institutions through which they are articulated, which influence policy formulation, as well as the intellectual resources on which policy makers draw against this background, before addressing the implications of Libya's foreign policy in specific geopolitical arenas.[5]

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[2] Rentier state: a state where income is based on returns on an asset not itself the result of investment; neo-patrimonial state: one in which elite power is the consequence of access to a dominant charismatic ruler in a system which is replicated at all levels within the polity. See Eisenstadt, S. N. (1973), *Traditional patrimonialism and modern neopatrimonialism*, Sage Publications (Beverly Hills).

[3] Joffé G. (2008), "Prodigal or pariah? Foreign policy in Libya," in Vandewalle D. (2008)(ed.), *Libya since 1969: Qadhafi's revolution revisited*, Palgrave-Macmillan (New York and Basingstoke), pp. 202-207.

[4] The *jamahiri* political system is the system of direct popular democracy that requires all Libyans to participate in the political decision-making process in Libya at all levels — regional, national, and global — and that denies the role of political parties within the political process because they are perceived to be divisive. See Vandewalle D. (2008), "Libya's revolution in perspective: 1969-2000," in Vandewalle D. (2008)(ed.), *op- cit.*, pp. 16-29.

[5] It should, perhaps, be read in conjunction with Joffé E.G.H. (2008), "Prodigal or pariah: foreign policy in Libya," in Vandewalle D. (2008)(ed.), *op. cit.*

3   The Intellectual Bases of Libya's Foreign Policy

Foreign policy in Libya is, in theory, a facet of the *Jamahiriya* in which "the people are the instrument of governing."[6] In practice, however, the *jamahiri* system itself owes its conception to the intellectual vision of the Libyan leader, as it developed during the first three years after the Great September Revolution in 1969. It was in April 1973 that the concept of Libya's stateless state, driven by direct popular democracy, emerged, distilled, as it were, from the broader principles of Nasirist Arab nationalism in which the Revolution had been born. Thus those sources that informed the construction and operation of the Libyan political system also inform the intellectual project behind foreign policy.

The Green Book, which emerged in stages between 1973 and 1976, is usually held to be the basic document defining the ideology that Colonel Qadhafi constructed in the 1970s to reorganize the Libyan state but it does not explicitly discuss foreign policy, either in terms of the principles that govern it or in terms of the objectives it seeks. The same is largely true of the Libyan intellectual seminar, held in May 1970 and involving the Revolutionary Command Council and opinion-formers in Libya.[7] Its five point

agenda only touched on foreign affairs in its attention to Arab unity, itself an integral extension of the Nasirist agenda the Libyan revolution had espoused. We must therefore look elsewhere to appreciate what the principles behind Libya's actions and decisions in foreign affairs may be.

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[6] Al-Qathafi M. (nd), *The Green Book*, Public Establishment for Publishing (Tripoli), p. 34.

[7] Ansell M.O. and al-Arif I.M.(1972), *The Libyan Revolution: a sourcebook of legal and historical documents*, The Oleander Press (Harrow, UK), pp. 253-300. The Revolutionary Command Council members who participated were Colonel Qadhafi, Lieutenant-Colonel Abu Bakr-Yunis, Major Abdesslam Jallud, Major Bashir Huwaydi, Captain Umar Muhayshi and Captain M'Hamid al-Muqaryaf. Captain Muhayshi was executed in 1984 in the wake of a failed coup d'etat in 1975, after having been returned from Morocco, and Captain Muqarayaf eventually became the founder of the National Salvation Front for Libya in 1980.

4 COLONEL QADHAFI'S VIEWS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

There is, in fact, very little domestic Libyan comment on the principles behind the country's foreign policy concerns, most Libyan commentators being predominantly concerned with domestic politics.[8] Most Libyan commentators have focused on domestic issues or on the ideological implications of the Libyan leader's pronouncements and dicta[9] on policy issues generally and few of these relate specifically to the basic principles on which foreign policy has been constructed. Thus, together with concepts put forward in the Green Book, they have looked to the ideas emerging from the colonel's vision of the "Third Universal Theory," his alternative to communism and capitalism as a global ideology, for inspiration. Rejecting the monopoly of both capital and labor as explicatory drivers, Colonel Qadhafi argued instead that human society and the polities emerging from it were driven by nationalism and religion.[10] His vision of nationalism was cultural, not territorially-based

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[8] See, for example, works by Amal Obeidi, Zahi Mogherbi, and Ahmed Ahima or by opposition figures such as Mansour Kikhiya.

[9] These have been collected in annual volumes as *al-Sijill al-Qawmi*, and specifically religious discourses are available as *Khutab wa-Ahadith al-Qa'id al-Dinyah*.

[10] St. John R.B. (2008*), Libya: from colony to independence*, Oneworld (Oxford), pp. 157-159. The colonel's concept of a new universal theory emerged in June 1973, just two months after the "people's authority," the guiding principle behind the direct popular democracy that characterized the Jamahiriya, was proclaimed. As Ronald Bruce St. John points out, it marked "the end of the ideological beginning" of post-revolutionary Libya. Such ideas still form the basis of the Libyan political experience and the practice of the Libyan stateless state.

and he viewed religion as monotheism, of which Islam was the ultimate expression.[11]

Insofar as Colonel Qadhafi has discussed such issues at length since those early days, the best source for them has proved to be the collections of his speeches over the years. These make it clear that the Leader of the Revolution has several ongoing concerns that continue to inform his worldview and that find their ideological antecedents in this conceptual bedrock. A problem here is that his speeches are often internally contradictory but certain clear themes do, nevertheless, emerge. One of the key elements has been his attitude toward the colonial experience in Libya and elsewhere. He sees this as having been a hegemonic project, which is still active and responsible for the ills of the developing world today.[12]

Thus, in Sebha in 2007, he blamed colonialism for the divisions that exist inside the Muslim world, particularly that between sunnism and shi'ism.[13] The importance of the Fatimids, under whom Sunni and Shi'a lived in harmony together to Colonel Qadhafi was to be made clear in a subsequent speech. Allied to this is a powerful

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[11] An excellent source for Colonel Qadhafi's essential ideological attitudes is Burgat F. (1995), "Qadhafi's ideological framework," in Vandewalle D. (1995)(ed.), *Qadhafi's Libya: 1969-1994*, St. Martin's Press (New York), pp. 49-51.

[12] "Libyan leader says enemy recruiting agents abroad, coveting country's oil," March 1, 2007, available at http://site.securities.com.

[13] In overture to Iran, Qaddafi declares North Africa Shi'ite and calls for the establishment of a new Fatimid state," April 6, 2007, available at http://memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD153507.

sense of anti-imperialism, most recently voiced in a meeting of the European Union and the African Union in 2006 where he blamed European powers for the confusions of identity and language that affect Africa.[14] Yet, at the same time, no doubt as a pragmatic reflection of the contemporary Libyan reality, he has claimed that Europe is no longer a colonial power; it is intent, instead, on cooperation with Libya and Africa.[15]

A counterweight to Colonel Qadhafi's anti-imperialism is an abiding belief in the value of national unity around shared cultural paradigms. Originally, of course, this was based on the linguistic principles behind Arab nationalism and was a core component in defining the Libyan revolution as a statement about shared Arab identity, as enunciated in Gamel Abdel Nasser's Egypt in the 1960s. The failure of the ideal of Arab Unity, interestingly enough, is today attributed to the divisive effects of colonialism and Zionism, thus implicitly identifying the Arab nationalism project as anti-imperialist and progressive.[16] Its failure has meant, for the colonel, the betrayal of the Palestinians, although, in the Libyan domestic context, he has often been unsympathetic to Palestinian needs and concerns.[17]

Even though Libya effectively abandoned its pursuit of the Arab unity ideal after 1997, the principle of unity remains. Now it has been turned toward Africa and, although the cultural principles behind Arab unity cannot apply, Colonel Qadhafi has turned back to anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism to justify his call for continental integration. According to Qadhafi, it is the shared colonial experience that binds Africans together, an experience that continues as Europe and America continue to exploit the continent.[18] Unity is thus a recognition of the implicit threat to developmental objectives that postcolonial interference represents. No real development can occur in Africa, the Libyan leader would argue, without the prerequisite of political unity.[19]

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[14] Statement of the Leader, Muammar al-Qadhafi in the African Union/European Union ministerial meeting on migration and development, November 22, 2006, available at http://www.algathafi.org/en/migration_development_en.htm.

[15] "The Brother Leader addresses the Faculty and students of Cambridge University," October 22, 2007, available at http://www.algathafi.org/html-english/cat_1_2.htm.

[16] Text of Leader's speech at the student festival held by the Arab General Union of Students and Pan-African Student Union in Syria, March 31, 2008, available at http://www.jananews.ly/Page.aspx?PageId=10090&Pl=25.

[17] Thus, when the Palestine National Authority was instituted in 1995, the Libyan leader argued that Palestinians now had a state and should return there. For example, in May 1995, just after the Authority had started to operate within the West Bank, the 30,000 Palestinians in Libya found that their work permits had been terminated.

[18] Speech of the "Leader of the Revolution" at the Senegalese people's activities, April 7, 2007, available at http://www.jananews.com/Index.aspx?Language=3.

[19] Speech at the Accra summit, Accra, Ghana (June 25, 2007), available at http://www.jananews.com.

5 AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY PROCESS

Even if the Libyan leader does define the ideological agenda behind Libyan foreign policy in terms that relate to anti-imperialism and regional unity, as his comments on Europe suggest, he is increasingly obliged to recognize practical realities.[20] Since the end of the Lockerbie crisis in 1997,[21] Libya has been able to rebuild its bridges with the West, destroyed by the Qadhafi regime's espousal of a radical and confrontational agenda in the 1970s, an approach that eventually culminated in American attacks on Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986. Libya's response was not defiant; instead the regime began, opportunistically and pragmatically, to try to rebuild its relations with European states and the United States, a venture that the Lockerbie affair delayed but did not effectively alter.

This suggests that, alongside the radical anti-imperialist ideology that Colonel Qadhafi's Libya has espoused since the beginning of the regime, there is also a profound opportunism and pragmatism that informs the reality of Libya's foreign policy. Thus, in 1970, Libya had been responsible for ushering in the rise in oil prices that was to eventually see oil producers wrest control of the oil market from the international oil companies and thus set the stage for the spate of nationalizations of oil properties later on in the decade. Yet the colonel is well aware of the essentially cooperative nature of the relationship between producer and consumer, as he made clear during his visit to Paris in 2007.[22]

Indeed, the juxtaposition of ideology and pragmatic opportunism helps to clarify the sometimes abrupt changes in policy direction that occur. Indeed, the three concepts of ideology, pragmatism, and opportunism are not mutually exclusive but can be mobilized in combination with, and in response to specific problems, as has been made clear by Libya's varying reactions over time to the United States.[23] Thus, when Libya opened its borders in 1997 to the rest of Africa on an ideological impulse, it created a massive migrant problem which, by September 2000, generated extensive anti-migrant violence in

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[20] By "process" we understand both the intellectual, and often ideological inputs, as well as the analytical processes that are structured into a coherent pattern of policy articulation, not the mechanisms through which it is articulated and applied.

[21] In late December 1988, an American airliner flying from London to New York was blown up over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, a catastrophe in 270 died. Although initial suspicions focused on Iran since the previous July an Iran Air passenger aircraft had been destroyed by missile fire from an American warship with the loss of all on board, by 1991 Libya had been identified as the culprit by the Scottish police and American investigators. In 1992 it was placed under United Nations sanctions until it handed over two named suspects for trial in a Scottish court set up especially for the purpose in Holland in 1997.

[22] "Text of the Leader's speech in his meeting with French economic activists in Paris," available at http://www.jananews.com/Page.aspx?PageId=91786 and "African activists in France flocked yesterday to the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris to meet the Leader of the Revolution," available at http://www.jananews.com? Index.aspx?Language=3.

[23] These three terms have quite specific meanings here: ideology reflects policy responses derived from ideological preconceptions; pragmatism consists of rational responses to what are perceived to be real situations; and opportunism is the exploitation of opportunity to gain advantage. The latter two, of course can combine and can mobilize the first to provide principled reasons for action.

Libya's western coastal cities. Yet, subsequently, it had no problem in collaborating with the European Union, especially with Italy, in preventing migrant flows northwards into Europe.[24] It was particularly anxious to collaborate after Italy had been encouraged, by a sudden flux of migrants into Lampedusa in 2004, to persuade the European Council to remove the arms embargo imposed on Libya years earlier, so that it could re-equip its naval and border forces.

Perhaps the supreme example of this ability to morph from ideological commitment to pragmatism has been the story of Libya's relations with the United States and, to a lesser degree, with Britain. In the 1970s and 1980s, Libya was notorious for its ideological hostility toward Western states, particularly after it had forced Britain and the United States out of their airbases on its territory. Its sympathies for national liberation movements and its encouragement of their violent activities[25] intensified the confrontation until it provoked the United States to attack it in 1986. Then policy abruptly switched to pragmatic opportunism in order to deflect Western hostility. In effect, the essential outcome of Libya's radical anti-imperialism had merely called the survival of

the regime itself into question as Libya became the archetypal "pariah state."

In view of what appears to have been a substantial diplomatic failure up to the end of the 1980s, which was overshadowed by the catastrophe of the Lockerbie affair in the 1990s, it is worth asking the question why Libya should have engaged in such policies and how it failed so spectacularly to achieve its anti-imperialist objectives. A conventional neo-realist response would be to suggest that Libya's regional diplomacy is conditioned solely by its perceptions of security threats from within the region and that its failures arise from the ideological preconceptions that were allowed to shroud these underlying realities. In other words, the constructivist nature of its policy articulation had been allowed to dominate the state's realist intentions. This, of course must be true, as the events of July 1977 involving Egypt demonstrate. On that occasion, the Sadat regime in Egypt, tiring of Libya's noisy attempts at unity and threats after the policy had failed, fought a short border war instead. The same could be said of the lengthy denouement with Britain and the United States.

It is not, however, the whole story, for, as we have seen, contemporary Libya is also a radical state in which the radicalism had not just been rhetorical in character and this, too, is reflected in its foreign policy decisions. Ideology can then supervene over perceived state interest or, as with the United States in recent years, the reverse can also be true. Yet, in reality, much of the pattern of events described above also demonstrates the significant degree of opportunism that seems to inform many Libyan diplomatic decisions, often

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[24] See Paoletti E. (2009), *Bilateral agreements on migration and North-South power relations: the case of Italy and Libya*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Oxford).

[25] Ironically enough, Colonel Qadhafi himself is strongly opposed to terrorism and Libya was the first country in the world to issue an international arrest warrant against Osama bin Ladin. See "The Leader's analysis of the current crisis of terrorism in the world," available at http://www.algathafi.org/html-english/cat_03_10.htm.

as a result of the personalized policy process that relies so heavily on Colonel Qadhafi himself. This opportunism, perhaps better construed as diplomatic flexibility, has been seized upon by some commentators as an explanation of the decision-making process in Tripoli. Thus Zartman and Kluge conclude that "Libya's foreign policy is a policy of opportunity, conducted on the basis of rather constant principles."[26] The question then is what those constant principles might be — ideology appearing to be one of them — whenever it is not in conflict with the state's opportunistic prag-matism.

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[26] Zartman W.I. and Kluge A.C. (1983), "Qaddafi's foreign policy," *American-Arab Affairs*, Fall 1983,Vol. 6,, p. 183.

6 THE IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING

The ideological dimension of Libyan foreign policy was incorporated into a foreign policy model by Mary-Jane Deeb in her discussion of Libyan policy in North Africa in the 1980s. She describes the Libyan foreign policy system as a pyramid, with the neighboring states of North Africa and the Sahel at the peak, the Arab world dominated by the Mashriq next, followed by the Islamic world overall, then the developing world and, as a substratum at the base, the industrialized countries of both East and West, as they then were. She adds that, the more remote an issue has been from Libya's core interests — which are security-led in nature and dominated by North Africa — the more ideologically motivated policy will be. With respect to the role of Libyan pragmatism in foreign policy, she points to Zartman and Kluge's conclusions given previously.[27]

For Ronald Bruce St. John, Libyan foreign policy under Qadhafi has been ideologically-driven and aggressive, although it drew on the principles established for Libya's foreign relations by his monarchical predecessor, making use of a strategic constancy and a tactical flexibility, based on Arab unity and anti-imperialism, although quite prepared to exploit Western technological superiority.[28] It is a view that coincides with that of Zartman and Kluge and, given the innate pragmatism that e Deeb would argue

characterizes Libya's policy toward its closer neighbors, provides us with an explanation of the twists and turns of Libyan policy in the period from 1970 until the end of the 1980s, when the current practice of opportunist pragmatism asserted itself as a result of Western (primarily American) hostility.

Yet it is not a complete explanation, for many of the decisions that had been made were to lead to Libya's discomfiture and to outcomes that were to its detriment after its early successes in the region. The main reason for this seems to have been that Libya did not preserve its pragmatic approach but repeatedly allowed its ideological preconceptions to interfere. There appears, in short, to be a dialectic between pragmatism and ideology that undermines the neat patterns suggested above as mechanisms to explain Libya's policy choices. Furthermore, the outcome of this dialectic seems to be that policy is iteratively influenced by experience; Libya has learned to appreciate the danger of concerted American hostility, for example. This, therefore, is an indication that other factors must also influence the way in which options are selected. The key to this, as described above, is the way in which in Libya, a supposedly stateless state, and the attitudes, interests, and convictions of Colonel Qadhafi, its "Leader" albeit without any formal role within the state, are determinant in the policy-making process.

Indeed, it is in the intense personalization of the policy process that the answer to the conundrum of Libyan foreign policy really lies, for it is here that the balance between pragmatism and ideology is struck and where the less rational aspects of

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[27] Deeb M-J. (1991), *Libya's foreign policy in North Africa*, West view Press (Boulder Colorado), pp. 8-9.

[28] St. John R.B. (1987), *Qaddafi's world design: Libyan foreign policy 1969-1987*, Saqi Books (London), pp. 143-150.

Libya's ideology can be manifested. One of the most striking aspects of this is the way in which, usually, pragmatic opportunism can tone down the ideological content of policy if that serves the national interest. However, when national interest is not involved, ideological concerns can become the determinant of policy. Thus, Libyan pragmatism produces outcomes similar to those of other, more normal states, although the very specific opportunism that can emerge can reflect uniquely Libyan concerns. However, it is the ideological input to foreign policy that generates the unmistakable Libyan approach to the policy process.

As Deeb points out, Colonel Qadhafi's regime never enjoyed access to the natural legitimacy of the Sanusi-based monarchy it had replaced because of its origins in the Sirtica tribes and the security services, even if it attained it through its policies and actions. Therefore, it has constantly been aware of its own perceptions of internal and external weakness and has used ideology, particularly that of Arab (later African) nationalism and unity, to buttress its pragmatic initiatives in Africa and elsewhere.[29] The personalized nature of the decision-making process increases the risk that the calculations involved can reflect more prejudice than objective evaluation.

Since the Qadhafi regime rejects the notion of state, its policy can extend to encompass those of nonstate and trans-state actors that it perceives share its objectives. By the same token, it has generally rejected supra-state actors that project values, such as international law and universal

norms that it considers antithetical —although it has, on occasion, taken recourse to the International Court of Justice.[30] In general, however, its policies based on the ideological imperatives of Arab nationalism at the time, inter-state union, and anti-imperialism can easily appear to threaten the stability of states and regimes that do not share its objectives. This, in turn, would lead to the kind of policy failure and isolation that characterized Libya in the Arab world, Africa, and the West in the late 1980s and the 1990s. The reversing of this process, however, can be as abrupt and radical, given the personalized nature combined with the structured environment of the policy process. Indeed, in the late 1980s, the Qadhafi regime realized the consequences of its ideological radicalism and impulsiveness, and began a slow and often incoherent process of trying to reverse the path it had selected. Given the intervention of the Lockerbie crisis, it was not to achieve its objectives until 1999 albeit even then only partially, and would only capture American acceptance in 2005.

One aspect of this was to partially abandon ideological radicalism in practice, even if the rhetoric remained. This was accompanied by an inversion of the pyramidal structure of foreign policy so that the West replaces North Africa as the target

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[29] Deeb M-J. *op .cit.*; 188-191.

[30] Libya has referred to the court on at least three occasions over maritime border disputes with Tunisia (judgments issued in 1981, 1982, and 1985) and Malta (judgments issued in 1984 and 1985) and over a territorial border dispute with Chad (judgment issued in 1994). It also referred two disputes with the United Kingdom and the United States over the Lockerbie affair and the Montréal Convention (judgments issued in 1998). See http://www.worldlii.org/int/cases/ICJ/toc-L.html and http://www.worldlii.org/int/cases/ICJ/toc-T.html.

of Libyan pragmatism, while the Arab world is marginalized and measured against ever-stricter ideological criteria. Thus, Libya has increasingly and progressively rejected the Arab League as a vehicle for regional policy on the grounds of its incompetence and because of the failure of Arab states to meet its ideological imperatives. Yet this reversal is only partially true, for Africa has now been elevated in place of the Arab world as the ideological partner for Libya's ambitions of regional identity — while the Arab world retains the sympathies of Libyans at large. The real question then is how committed is Colonel Qadhafi to opportunist pragmatism rather than radical ideological consistency and to what extent can the latter serve as a rhetorical cloak to shroud the former or, indeed to what degree does the dialectic between radicalism and pragmatism come to reinforce themselves in the articulation of policy, despite the fact that they appear to be uncomfortable bedfellows. The pattern of policy change toward the West suggest that this will be quite acceptable to him, provided only that there is no pressure for domestic change that would endanger the stability of the regime, and diplomatic cynicism seems likely to ensure that that will be the case.

7 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Formally, Libya has the institutions typical of most states through which the policy process is articulated, even though they are not tested or confirmed by the electoral process. There is a central ministry, a "secretariat" in Libyan official parlance, with a minister (or "secretary") in charge who is answerable to the premier as a member of the cabinet ("general popular committee"). As do other states, Libya articulates its foreign policy through its representatives abroad who fulfill the conventional duties and obligations of diplomats, and it maintains embassies for this purpose. On occasion, these institutions have had a revolutionary flavor, as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s when they were designated "peoples' bureau" and their staffs often eschewed the formal niceties of diplomatic usage.

Formal Institutions

During this period, in keeping with the essential principles of the "People's Authority,"[31] Libya's embassies were regarded more as vehicles providing services to Libyan citizens abroad and discharging Libya's revolutionary objectives than as institutions representing the Libyan state abroad. Nor were these changes merely a matter of presentation. They reflected the role that was now to be played by the Revolutionary Committee Movement (*Harakat al-Lajnati ath-Thawra*) within the process of governance. The

movement, the core of the informal but increasingly dominant revolutionary governmental process instituted by Colonel Qadhafi under his direct control at the end of the 1970s, has become a central element of the Libyan political system,[32] even if it is increasingly contested by the reform movement led by Colonel Qadhafi's son, Saif al-Islam. In practice, this meant that the professional ministerial and diplomatic staffs were supplemented by members of the Revolutionary Committees who took precedence in articulating the foreign policy process. Alongside such Revolutionary Committee members were also representatives from the External Security services.

One consequence of these changes in personnel was a change in the objectives and behavior of the people's bureau.[33] At the start of the 1980s, they were to become the major vehicle through which Colonel Qadhafi's instruction in February 1980 to "eliminate the stray dogs of the revolution" was to be articulated abroad, just as the Revolutionary Committees themselves were to discharge the same function inside Libya itself.[34] This policy, which was completely at odds with diplomatic tradition and practice, was to begin the severe decline in relations with Western states that was to lead to a breach in diplomatic relations with Britain in 1984. The breach with the United States had occurred earlier, in December 1979, when

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[31] This meant in effect that the revolutionary content of the Jamahiriya was dominant over the formal structure of the executive branch of government. See the 1977 "Declaration on the establishment of the Authority of the People," available at http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ly01000.html.

[32] Mattes H. (2009), "Formal and informal authority in Libya since 1969," in Vandewalle D. (2009) (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[33] This occurred on September 1, 1979, as part of the process of the militarization of Libyan society. Vandewalle D. (1995) (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[34] St. John R.B. (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 169-171.

Libya refused to help in the United States embassy hostage crisis in Iran and after the American embassy in Tripoli had been destroyed by an angry mob.

This policy itself was to be gradually reversed after the United States bombed Tripoli and Benghazi claiming it was in retaliation for Libyan involvement in the bombing of a Berlin discotheque frequented by American service personnel. It coincided with what British and American diplomats characterized as a "charm offensive" by Libya to recover ground it had lost in the international arena by its former radicalism and with moderating moves in Libya to improve the domestic situation as well. Over time, therefore, Libyan diplomats recovered their primary function of representing their government to the outside world and the revolutionary committees receded into the diplomatic background, although the principle of a Libyan embassy as a social welfare organization for Libyans abroad persisted. The change itself coincided with a significant decline in the power of the Revolutionary Committees inside Libya as well.[35] Indeed, it could be argued that Colonel Qadhafi's intense criticism of the Revolutionary Committees in March 1988 was the trigger for this change. Over the past 20 years, although there has been a Revolutionary Committee presence in every Libyan embassy, it has not been driving the diplomatic process and diplomats have maintained their primary role.

[35] Mattes H-P. (1995), "The rise and fall of the revolutionary committees," in Vandewalle D. (1995)(ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

This decline in the revolutionary content of policy has been reflected in a professionalization of the diplomatic process through the Diplomatic Academy in Tripoli. This institution, which comes under the Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, has been responsible for the training of diplomats since 1976. Entrants — 50 a year — have to speak English in addition to their native Arabic, although this has only been a requirement since 1986, since the end of the revolutionary period. The year-long course covers typical subjects relevant to diplomats; international law, international negotiation, crisis management, and international institutions, particularly the United Nations, the European Union, and the African Union.

Successful participants enter the foreign ministry, with the top ten participants being immediately posted abroad for four years. The Academy also trains diplomats for other African countries and is apparently seeking links with similar nongovernmental institutions in Europe. Although the ministry now handles diplomatic appointments below the level of chargé d'affaires, the appointments of higher-rank diplomats are subject to approval by the General People's Congress.

Informal actors

This external manifestation of Libyan diplomacy, however, is only one half of the complex process of Libya's foreign policy implantation. The real focus of policy implementation lies within Libya itself and reflects the structured environment within which the Libyan leader himself operates. Discussions with Libyan officials and with foreign

diplomats have yielded the result that all agree that the essential focus of decision-making in political matters, including diplomacy and foreign policy, is centered around him.

Yet, at the same time, his decisions are mediated through contact and discussion with formal and informal advisers, even if they are his ultimate responsibility. They form a kind of "temporary elite" in that their membership to the core advisory group depends entirely on the Colonel's interests in the projects and policies they espouse. Once his personal interests and convictions shift, they cease to be members of the core, yet always available to be reintegrated, should the Libyan leader switch back toward their points of view. It is a fate that can await the highest and lowest of policymakers, as Major Jalloud found out many years ago. He remains a Qadhafi intimate because of his association with the Revolution but no longer has influence on policy itself.

It is, therefore, also the case that no individual apart from the Libyan leader would initiate a policy without his prior agreement. The way in which this foreign policy group operates, however, remains very obscure and the picture described below is built up from a series of interviews conducted by one of the authors in September 2009 in Libya, London, and New York. The interviews were conducted under a guarantee of anonymity and no direct reference can, therefore, be made to them here.

The actual process and environment of policy generation is intensely informal, alongside its intense personalization around the figure of the Guide of the Revolution, Colonel Qadhafi, as

stated above. This process is intensified by the fact that the General People's Congress, which constitutionally should be the seat of policy formulation, only meets twice a year and thus cannot play such a constant role. Beyond that, the process is individualized, as might be expected in a country such as Libya, where patronage-clientage links are crucial pathways within the bureaucracy. Thus, within the foreign ministry itself, for example, the actual rank of an individual is not the dominant issue; it is his personal access to the structured environment in which policy is actually formulated that is crucial. Thus vice ministers might outshine their ministerial superiors who may just be executors of policy, not originators.

Other officials who have no direct connection with the foreign ministry may also have a role in policy formulation because of their personal access to the Libyan leader, whether in the executive or the legislative arm of government and whether through personal or kinship links with the leader. In addition, it is clear that, alongside the General People's Congress, the al-Qadhafi Charitable Foundation headed by Colonel Qadhafi's second son, Saif al-Islam, also has a significant role in providing input into foreign policy formulation, thus underlining the role of familial links within the policy process. The Colonel's fourth son, al-Mu'atassim, may also have a role in this process because of his oversight responsibilities in the security and energy fields.

Insofar as Saif al-Islam also heads an informal reformist group inside Libya and leading elements in the General People's Congress

represent a hard-line revolutionary stance close to that of the Revolutionary Committees, the two organizations are often at loggerheads over the advice they would provide and give an indication of the contending forces that can influence the policy process. Often this opposition to the reformists is headed by Abdallah Ibrahim, former secretary to the General People's Congress and a relative of the Libyan leader from the Qadhadhfa, who also has a significant role within the Revolutionary Committee Movement. Yet the General People's Congress is not necessarily a unified body and other individuals, such as its former secretary for foreign affairs, Suleiman Shahumi, can also play a significant role.

What emerges from this picture is an informal environment around the Libyan leader in which certain institutions and individuals representing different currents of opinion provide comment and advice on major issues of policy, including foreign policy. They include the General People's Congress, the al-Qadhafi Charitable Foundation, certain members of the leader's family and officials within the executive branch of government. Often the latter act as points of contact with foreign embassies in Tripoli and, in addition, there is known to be an inner circle of advisers about whom virtually nothing is known. They probably reflect some of the elements of the rijal al-khaima — the "men of the tent," the colonel's old associates, many from the Union of Free Officers — which planned and executed the revolution in 1969, or the five remaining members of the Revolutionary Command Council, which ruled Libya for the first three years after the revolution. Decisions on important

matters are, however, entirely the leader's responsibility and, on occasion, he makes them without reference of any kind to his advisers.

Since 1997, with Libya beginning the process of reintegration into the international community, the process of policy engagement has begun to change. The sinews of engagement with the wider world have become far more complex and more predictable, although surprises can still occur. Routines have begun to characterize the engagement process, even if the inner core of policy decision-making remains as obscure as ever. The development of this engagement with the wider world has been initially slow and often hesitant, reflecting both the internal tensions within policy formation and the difficulties of overcoming Libya's often radical past. It has also reflected the difficulties involved in the normalization of relations with the United States, a process not really completed until the current ambassador — the first since 1972 — arrived in Tripoli in late December 2008. Although full diplomatic relations had been restored more than three years before on May 15, 2006, remnants of the two countries' shared past delayed the ambassadorial appointment.

Intermediaries

As a result, there is now a routinized and structured environment in which interactions occur between foreign embassies in Tripoli and the Libyan administration. Typically, these are not necessarily articulated through the secretariat for foreign affairs but through individual officials who appear to act as conduits between the inner

policymaking core and foreign diplomats, and who handle certain specific aspects of relations. One major embassy in Tripoli has reported that its interlocutors numbered between ten and a maximum of 20 Libyan officials, a view with which other diplomats concur. The most important of these officials have had lengthy experience of diplomacy and are often well-known to their foreign counterparts.

Thus, two names that are currently and repeatedly cited by diplomats in Tripoli as major points of contact are Dr. Abdulati al-Obeidi and Mohammed Siala. Dr. al-Obeidi has long played a role in Libyan diplomacy, having been prominent in negotiations in several major recent issues, including the Lockerbie agenda, the long-drawn-out crisis over the Bulgarian nurses affair and nuclear disarmament. He currently appears to be responsible for issues connected with the European Union and the negotiations for the proposed "Framework Agreement" between Libya and the Union and the associated problem of irregular migration.

Mohammed Siala, who has been assistant secretary for economic cooperation within the foreign affairs secretariat, handles economic issues. Oil and gas issues are dealt with outside the formal government process, although there is still an oversight committee in the General People's Congress. Here, responsibility devolves on Dr. Shukri Ghanem, the protégé of Saif al-Islam, recently reinstated as head of the Libyan National Oil Company, and a former premier. He was ousted in 2007 by the hard-line Revolutionary Committees, which themselves have now been out-maneuvered as their influence declines because of the changed diplomatic environment in which the Libyan state operates today.

The former head of the external security bureau, Moussa Koussa, who is currently foreign secretary, is a longstanding confident of the Libyan leader and has now taken responsibility for the Libyan investment policy toward Africa, an activity that used to be the prerogative of Bashir Saleh Bashir, who was the secretary for African affairs and who is known to be an intimate adviser of the Colonel. Others who have a significant input into foreign affairs include Ahmed Fituri, who handles relations with the United States; Mohamed al-Barrani, who handles Asia; Abouzeid Omar Dourda, who was Libyan ambassador to the United Nations and now handles the External Security Organization; and Abdallah Sanusi, who handles military security and focuses on Sudan and Darfur. The actual decision-making process, of course, remains utterly opaque, although its personalized nature and the fact that senior officials are constantly being reshuffled without warning means that it can often be very slow to respond to external circumstance.

8 POLICY ARENAS

The global arenas in which Libya wishes to significantly engage in terms of foreign policy should by now be fairly clear. The Arab world and Africa are certainly primary areas of engagement but, despite their ideological importance, they are outweighed by the United States and, to a lesser extent, Europe. The BRICs and South East Asia have direct commercial relevance but they have not attracted Libya's ideological and political interests to any significant degree. This, of course, may change if growing multipolarity in the international arena challenges America's global hegemony, but this is unlikely in the medium-term.

What is significant, however, is the complexity of the interplay between ideology and pragmatism over time, especially in the evolution of Libya's policies toward the United States and Britain and, later, toward the Arab and African worlds. It is here that this complexity can be followed in some detail, although our imperfect knowledge of the obscure policy formulation process will always introduce an element of uncertainty to any interpretation. It is here, too, that the most intriguing aspect of contemporary Libya's policy institutions and processes is emerging, as Libya seems to be moving toward a complex but institutionalized neo-patrimonial system[36] dominated by Colonel Qadhafi, as charismatic leader at a global scale, but operating independently of him in terms of day-to-day tactical issues.

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[36] The term combines Weber's "patrimonial" and "legal-rational" concepts of bureaucracy and aptly describes the crucial feature of access to the authority of the leader as the path for decision-making and articulation of power.

The United States and Britain

It may seem strange to bracket the United States and Britain together, given Britain's evolving status as a European power. However, for much of the second half of the 20th century, British policy has been closely aligned to that of the United States. Furthermore, specific circumstances have obliged the two countries to work closely together in connection with Libya, with Britain on occasion mediating between the United States and Europe over this and other related issues. This fact alone means that a combined study of their foreign relations with that country is well justified.

Libya's relations with the United States have become the dominant theme in its foreign policy process over the last 20 years and have highlighted the way in which ideological concerns have been modified and restructured by pragmatism and opportunism. Britain, which for reasons of global political interests, tended to follow American concerns after 1979 and the coming to power of the Thatcher government, had experiences that paralleled the United States as far as Libya was concerned. Yet in both cases, certainly at the level of rhetoric, ideology continued to play a significant role in Libyan policy formulation, as Colonel Qadhafi's recent address to the United Nations General Assembly made clear.[37] Indeed, the interaction between these two generative principles of Libyan foreign policymaking gives the relationship between Libya and the United States its peculiar cast, while Britain bobs along in the American wake.

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[37] Pilkington E., "Hundred minutes in the life of Muammar Qadhafi," *The Guardian*, September 23, 2009.

Initially, after the revolution in Libya and the Libyan insistence that both countries should abandon their military bases in Libya, both the United States and Britain decided to tolerate the new regime and to ignore its increasingly radical foreign policies. One major area of concern — especially after foreign policy in both countries moved sharply to the right in the wake of the accession of the Reagan administration to power at the start of 1981 — was Libyan involvement with nonstate actors, particularly those engaged in national liberation or, as it was now seen in the West, in terrorism. Nor was such support passive and, during the 1980s in particular, Libya became increasingly associated with violence and terrorism in Europe and the Middle East.

In part this was linked to the regime's anti-imperialist radicalism but it was also linked to its internal tensions and to the role of the Revolutionary Committee Movement as the guardian of the Libyan revolution after 1980.[38] Thus, at the start of the 1980s, Libyan dissidents in exile — in Britain, Austria, Italy, and the United States — faced hostility, harassment, and even assassination. In 1980, for example, the head of the Libyan people's bureau in London, Moussa Koussa, was forced to leave the country after some particularly unfortunate statements in the wake of a spate of killings of dissidents in Britain.

This radical Libyan approach to foreign policy culminated in the breach in diplomatic relations with Britain in 1984, in the wake of the killing of a policewoman in front of the Libyan embassy in London. Relations had been tense ever since

1973, after Libya gave significant material support to the Irish Republican Army, then beginning its campaign of violence against the British presence in Northern Ireland. Relations with the United States had been suspended in 1979, after a mob in Tripoli destroyed the embassy there, in the wake of Libya's decision to support the new clerical regime in Iran out of solidarity, in the wake of the embassy hostage crisis in Teheran.

The Libyan government subsequently refused American requests under the Carter presidency to intercede in Teheran to end the crisis, an action that was seen by the United States as unforgivable. Up to then, the idiosyncrasies and intensifying extremism of the revolutionary regime in Tripoli had been overlooked by Washington and London, despite their growing irritation about Libyan involvement in revolutionary terrorism. This was because, although Tripoli had been at the forefront of the move by producers to push up oil prices at the start of the 1970s, it had not followed other OPEC states in taking over foreign concessions in their entirety and was thus seen to act as a stabilizing force in world oil markets.[39]

The turnaround post 1986

Yet these negative developments in relations between Libya and the Anglo-Saxon world in the first half of the 1980s were to be reflected, by the end of the decade, in a dramatic decline in the role of ideology within Libyan foreign policy and

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[38] Hahn L. (1981), *Historical dictionary of Libya*, Scarecrow Press (Metuchen and London), p. 63.

[39] At the end of 1979, 40 percent of Libya's oil exports went to the United States. See Wadhams F. (1980), *The Libyan oil industry*, Croom Helm (London), pp. 324-330.

its replacement by an opportunist pragmatism that reflected the inevitable primacy of state interest over ideological preference. What was surprising in the Libyan case was the ability of the regime to carry out such a transformation with little apparent internal dissention and without major changes in domestic policy. Perhaps this was because, given the advantage of oil rent, few concessions had to be made to popular irritation over regime policy.

The transition period was, however, to be lengthy, delayed by what appears to have been a petulant last gust of ideological violence. Yet that in turn was, ironically enough, to condition the structure of Libya's foreign policy thereafter. Nonetheless, in effect, the Libyan reaction to the hardening attitudes of the Reagan administration toward it throughout the 1980s, as opportunist pragmatism replaced ideological conviction, reflected the colonel's adjustment to new international realities, especially after the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi in April 1986.

The change in attitude in Washington at the start of the 1980s had also coincided, not only with the advent of the Reagan administration to power, but also with the emergence of a very different doctrine concerning relations in the Middle East and elsewhere. Now American power would be projected at a global level, thus marking an end to the temporizing policies of previous administrations in the wake of the collapse of colonialism and the belief that it was not possible to intervene directly in regional affairs without provoking the specter of local engagement with the Soviet Union. Now challenges to the United States would be addressed by direct reaction or inter-

vention. This was to have a direct effect on Libya, firstly by forcing policymakers there to realize the extent of the change wrought in international affairs by the changes in Washington's attitudes and secondly by challenging the colonel's own assumptions about anti-imperialism and the international order.

Thus, over the next six years, relations steadily declined as the United States increasingly overtly opposed Libya. This covered a range of issues — over the Gulf of Sirt closure to international shipping, over support for the government in Grenada, over its attempts to influence American policy and most particularly over its open political and material support for terrorism.[40] There was also the question of Soviet support for the regime in Libya from 1973 onwards, particularly in the wake of Soviet expulsion from Egypt, although this waned toward the end of the Cold War.

Ultimately, the crisis resulted in "Operation El Dorado Canyon," the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi, in April 1986.[41] For the next 20 years, Libya was treated as a pariah by the United States, especially after American oil companies operating there were forced to leave by presidential fiat in June 1987. The United States actively pursued the destruction of the regime, supporting France in its interventions in Chad and indirectly contributing to Libya's humiliation there in 1987,

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[40] Sicker M.(1987), *The making of a pariah state*, Praeger (New York), pp. 112-120.

[41] This is discussed in great detail in Stanik J.T. (2003), *El Dorado Canyon: Reagan's undeclared war with Qaddafi*, Naval Institute Press (Annapolis).

as well as saving Libyan dissidents in N'Djamena when the Habré government was forced from power by the pro-Libyan Idriss Deby in December 1990.

In the wake of the bombings, Colonel Qadhafi and the Libyan regime seem to have come to the conclusion that the country could no longer ignore the reality of American power, nor could it afford to tweak the American nose with its policies of support for international anti-imperialism and terrorism, whether through merely verbal support, as it claimed, or materially, as the West believed. The point was reinforced by Libya's humiliating defeat in 1987 in its war in Chad. In fact, this change of heart reflects a very important aspect of Libya's foreign policy process, namely that opportunistic pragmatism over Libya's underlying national interest will supervene over issues of ideological coherence and radicalism at moments of real crisis. It was, perhaps, the first significant example of this process, which was to become ever more dominant with the passage of time and could really only occur with such alacrity because of the intense personalization of the policy process.

This transformation in attitudes and foreign policy drivers was not immediate but seems to have developed over a period of years in the wake of the American raids. It may well have been sparked in 1987, after the bombings, by the Libyan leader's realization of regime unpopularity, particularly in Cyrenaica, where he spent many months in the aftermath of the raids rebuilding regime alliances with the influential S'adi tribes. Then there was the evidence from Chad where Libya had to eventually abandon its

ambitions to annex the Aozou Strip in the face of international pressure. Even though Libya was able to place its own protégé in charge of the country in December 1990, it had to face the fact that the Habré regime had been able to assemble, with American and French help, a substantial force of dissident Libyans, designed to foment unrest inside Libya itself, as well as to guarantee international support against the Libyan regime itself.

Over the next few years, Libya engaged in what British diplomats, with increasing alarm, described as a successful "charm offensive," persuading European governments to reinforce their diplomatic links and their involvement in Libyan oil. Nor was there much doubt about Colonel Qadhafi's own conversion to moderation and cooperation, rather than radicalism and confrontation, even if for only tactical and pragmatic purposes. He seemed to have appreciated that the asymmetry of power between Libya and Western states, particularly the United States, predicated a different approach to international affairs. In the early 1990s, he remarked that he wanted to see Libya as the "Kuwait of the Mediterranean," by which he meant a state based on political moderation and participation, as well as economic well-being within the global community.

The real target, however, of this Libyan maneuver on the diplomatic scene, was the restoration of diplomatic links with both Britain and the United States. America had suspended relations in 1980 — although by an oversight they were never formally broken off. Britain had angrily severed all contacts in 1984 — an embarrassing breach,

especially as Britain had become an important holiday and medical centre for Libya. The breach with the United States was far more serious because it had immediate economic implications, for the Reagan administration had imposed unilateral sanctions on the export of Libyan oil to the United States, on the operations of American oil companies in Libya, and on the supply of all except humanitarian goods to Libya, thus interdicting the supply of American oil field equipment on which the Libyan oil industry was based. Travel to Libya was also banned and Libyan access to the United States was made very difficult indeed. These were not the first American sanctions against Libya; those had begun in the 1970s under the Carter administration. They were, however, the most severe sanctions yet imposed and reinforced the point that Libya was in no position to seriously challenge American power.

Libya's hopes of achieving a rapid solution to its diplomatic problems with major Western states received a massive setback in 1991, when it was accused of responsibility for the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie in December 1988 and of a French UTA airliner over Niger in September 1989.[42] The following year, United Nations sanctions killed off any chance of a rapid change in the diplomatic scene and in 1996, Congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, thus reinforcing the unilateral American sanctions regime. It was only after Britain, in the wake of the arrival of New Labour and the Blair government to power in May 1997, decided to find a way of resolving the Lockerbie crisis that new opportunities emerged. The suspension of United Nations sanctions in April 1999, once the two Lockerbie suspects had been handed over for trial, provided Libya with its first real chance of ending its isolation as far as Europe and America were concerned.

The lengthy period of gestation of this policy — some 17 years — should not be surprising, nor should the occasional self-destructive ambiguities of Libyan policymakers, for this is inherent in the process of Libyan foreign policy.[43] It is quite

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defeat in Chad.

[42] Indeed, some commentators — Arnold G. (1996), *The maverick state: Gaddafi and the New World Order*, Cassell (London), pp. 151-152— have suggested that the sudden and, at the time surprising, designation of Libya as being responsible for the Lockerbie incident had a lot to do with Libya's diplomatic successes in Europe. The UTA incident was far less ambiguous because there was evidence of a Libyan diplomat handing a passenger a booby-trapped briefcase before he boarded the flight. It was assumed to be linked to Libyan resentment at the role played by France in Libya's

[43] The issue of Lockerbie has never been satisfactorily explained. Although one of those directly accused of the incident, Abdelbasset al-Maghrahi, was eventually found guilty by a Scottish court sitting in the Netherlands at Kamp Zeist, his co-accused was found not guilty and there were serious questions about the quality of the evidence produced. Al-Maghrahi was released in late 2009 on compassionate grounds to a hurricane of American protest, and has since returned to Libya. In Libya, his guilt has never been accepted, either officially or unofficially and, even in its formal acceptance of responsibility for the incident, Libya did not go beyond accepting formal responsibility for the actions of its representatives — an obligation it has under international law. It should also be remembered that until 1990, the main weight of the enquiry into the incident, in Britain, was directed toward Iran, because of the 1988 Iran Airbus incident over the Persian Gulf, where the USS Vincennes shot down a civilian

possible for there to have been a coherent project of renewal and re-entry into the global system, alongside the continuation of anti-Western radicalism that produced the contradictions and tragedies of Lockerbie and the UTA bombing. Indeed, the inherent opportunism of Libyan foreign policy, reflected in Colonel Qadhafi's own attitudes of truculent independence, which in turn are rooted in his own social background and tribal origins, would have encouraged precisely this kind of ambiguity. Thus Libya would seek vengeance for Western rejection if it believed its involvement could be concealed alongside public statements seeking a diametrically opposed rapprochement. In addition, the lack of coherence inherent in personalized, charismatic political systems of the kind typified by Libya can easily result in the bureaucracy misinterpreting leadership objectives, especially if there had been recent radical reorientations of policy.[44]

Whatever the reason, the fact is that, in the wake of the trials of the two persons accused of respon-

airliner. Scottish police had begun to enquire into the Libyan dimension of the affair in that year, partly because of the evidence of timers, of the type used in the Lockerbie bomb, having been supplied to East Germany and Libya by a Swiss company.

[44] Hannah Arendt points out that such charismatic authoritarian systems often generate large areas of political autonomy within the bureaucratic structures in which the leading elements anticipate leadership decisions and orientations in making autonomous decisions of their own. The conventional superficial pyramidal system of authority is, in effect, a cover for bureaucratic confusion and autonomy that can lead to self-defeating policies in both the domestic and external spheres. See Arendt H. (1965), *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a report on the banality of evil*, Viking (New York).

sibility for the Lockerbie affair, Libya was able to negotiate compensation agreements with the families of the victims of the crash and to find a form of words admitting formal responsibility for the incident to appease the United States. As a result, in September 2003, United Nations sanctions were formally removed and, over the next year, remaining American objections to Libyan behavior were resolved, not least the question of Libya's weapons of mass destruction programs, which were ended in December 2003.

Limited diplomatic relations with the United States began in February 2004 and, during 2004 and 2005, commercial relations were also restored, with American oil companies returning to the country. Finally on May 15, 2006, Libya was removed from the United States Department of State's state terrorism list, with the promise of full diplomatic relations to follow — despite a Saudi allegation in early 2004 of a Libyan plot to assassinate the Saudi ruler, King Abdullah. The actual restoration required yet another compensation process — this time the creation of a special fund to satisfy other claims made against Libya and Libyan claims against the United States. Full relations were restored with the arrival of the new American ambassador in December 2008.

What was surprising was that all these developments occurred with no fundamental change in the ideology or the domestic behavior of the Libyan state — or, indeed, in its behavior in foreign affairs in view of the Saudi allegations. Furthermore, this had occurred at a time when the United States and its allies had proclaimed that democracy, not stability, was the object of

their policies in the Middle East and North Africa. At least as surprising has been the enthusiasm with which renewed relations have been received in Washington and London.

The British case is, perhaps, easier to appreciate, for the Blair government had been increasingly desperate to point to some success from its Middle Eastern policies. It was also, after all, the government that had broken the deadlock in 1999, which in turn had led to the end of the United Nations sanctions regime. There is also evidence that Britain wanted to rebuild its position in Europe and saw Libya's return to the international community as a means by which it could demonstrate to its partners its influence in a region of vital importance to Europe, particularly over questions of energy supply.[45] And, of course, there were specific British interests over access to commercial opportunities in the oil sector — generally seen as the most attractive prospect for oil and gas production worldwide — and in the refurbishment of Libya's decaying infrastructure.

The speed of the change in American attitudes was far more striking, for Libya had long been held to be the archetype of a rogue state. American statesmen had long called for an end to the Qadhafi regime. Yet now that regime, having modified only its foreign policy, was welcomed back into the international community by the Bush administration, which had been implacable in its hostility to states engaged in support for or activities connected to terrorism. No doubt the administration had felt under considerable pressure from commercial and industrial lobbies, such as USA Engage, which had long demanded an end to the use of sanctions as a policy that disadvantages American commercial interests abroad.

There was also the administration's concern for America's powerful oil sector that saw itself being shut out from the rush for new concessions in the wake of the suspension of United Nations sanctions.[46] Yet these pressures had been resisted for the first three years of its period in office with little difficulty. The decision, in early 2004, to begin to dismantle the unilateral sanctions regime, seems, however, to have been spurred by a quite different dynamic — the sudden enthusiasm from Congress to speed an improvement in diplomatic relations. This was particularly

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[45] The trade statistics demonstrate clearly Libya's dependence on access to the industrialized world, particularly the European Union, where three countries — Germany, Italy, and Spain — alone absorb 80 percent of Libya's exports, and where the European Union absorbs 85 percent of all exports and generates 75 percent of Libya's imports. See Joffé E.G.H. (2001), "Libya and Europe," *Journal of North African Studies*, 6, 4 (Winter 2001).

[46] There was the specific problem of oil companies forced to abandon their interests in Libya when the Reagan administration introduced its own presidential sanctions in 1986. The five American oil companies that were forced to leave — Marathon, Occidental, Oasis, Amerada Hess, and Hunt — left behind assets worth $2 billion and generating an income flow of $2.3 billion a year, but these have been worked in trust for them by companies linked to and created by National Oil Corporation (NOC) for this specific purpose. The companies concerned have now returned to Libya, spearheading what is expected to be an enthusiastic commercial invasion.

surprising, for Congress had been united in its hostility to Libya ever since it had passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act to the dismay of the Clinton administration in 1996.

There had, however, been signs of Congressional concern over the implications of the continued sanctions regime in 2002, when news emerged of European pressure on Libya to revoke the concessions held in trust for American companies which, in any case, would end in 2005. The turning point, however, seems to have been a Congressional visit to Libya in early 2004, with a delegation including the influential Californian congressman, Rep. Tom Lantos. The delegation returned impressed and ready to welcome a fundamental change in relations. Those relationships between Congress and Libya have been maintained ever since and have done much to promote renewed relations. The consequent change in Congressional attitudes seems to have provided the Bush administration with the domestic consensus it required for a change in foreign policy that it may have long contemplated.

There is no doubt that Libya had concluded long ago that irritating the United States was not a viable policy option, and its interests in engaging the international community for the sake of the rent it generated from international interest in its reserves of oil and gas go a long way toward explaining the dramatic changes in relations with the United States in recent years. Yet this cannot be the entire picture; no doubt the Bush administration, like the Blair government, was very anxious for evidence that its confrontational policies have generated palpable successes — and

Libya did pay compensation, did renounce terrorism and did give up its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) programs. Yet, if indeed the reasons were based on economic interest and strategic success, it is still surprising how willing Western allies have been to abandon any demands for domestic, even regime, change. Perhaps there Libya's geopolitical position in the Mediterranean alongside Algeria — another surprising new ally of the United States — and its commitment to the "war on terror" may have done much to render the unpalatable palatable.

Will that then be an end to 26 years of mutual irritation and misunderstanding? Yes and no. Were the Qadhafi regime to undergo the complete reformation at which it has hinted, with an end to its idiosyncratic and discriminatory "state of the masses" and a profound reform of its state-centered economy, the answer would, no doubt, be in the affirmative. Colonel Qadhafi, however, has shown his tenacity in the past and is hardly likely to retire into obscurity or abandon his political vision, even if he now sees himself as a statesman of global caliber rather than as the leader of a small, oil rich state. Nor is the regime, despite pressure for reform, necessarily about to become a shining beacon of democracy, accountability and the rule of law in the Middle East and North Africa. The real question is whether sufficient change will occur for Washington and its allies in Europe to be able to tolerate a regime that both have disliked for many years, for the sake of

access to its assets in oil and gas,[47] while ensuring regional geopolitical stability.

One dimension in which Libya has encouraged engagement has been over international terrorism. Given the regime's domestic experiences in the late 1990s and its earlier rejection of political Islam as divisive, its support for the "global war on terror" declared by the Bush administration in 2001 was both opportunistic and a pragmatic consequence of national experience. Libya was one of the first states to offer the United States its condolences and information in the wake of the attacks on Washington and New York on September 11, 2001 and it has maintained this stance ever since. Yet, at the same time, it has not endorsed American initiatives within the Sahel, based on the new American military command at Stuttgart, "Africom," of the "Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative," particularly insofar as that might interfere with its own plans for the Tuareg populations of the Sahara and the Sahel, which Colonel Qadhafi, to Algerian irritation, considers to be a Libyan preserve.[48] As ever, despite the overwhelming turn toward pragmatism and opportunism in foreign policy, an atavistic remnant of ideological isolation remains.

The European dimension

Perhaps the most important partner for Libya in foreign policy, outside the United States and Britain, is the European Union.[49] After all, European states, chief amongst them Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, have an acute interest in Libya's energy exports. Many European states, led by Italy and Germany, see Libya as a key export market.[50] Nonetheless, one of the more surprising aspects of European policy for the past decade has been the enthusiasm with which the European Commission and the Council have embraced Libya. Even though, in large measure, this parallels similar attitudes by individual European

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[47] Interest in gas is falling off sharply as unconventional and shale gas is becoming more important in both the United States and Europe.

[48] St. John R.B. (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

[49] The historical background to Libya's relationship with Europe is provided in Joffé E.G.H. (2001),*op. cit*.

[50] Libya was the European Union's 10th most important supplier in 2007, with energy providing the vast majority of its imports — Libya provided 7.42 percent of Europe's energy imports — and is its 45th most important export market. The European Union, on the other hand, has been Libya's most important supplier in 2007, generating 47.9 percent of its imports, and its most important export market, absorbing 79.2 percent of its exports. Exports to Europe, of course, consist almost entirely of energy — 90.3 percent of the total, with chemicals adding a further 1.3 percent in 2008. Europe, in turn, exports refined products to Libya — 20.9 percent of its exports to the North African state in 2008 — and food (11.0 percent), together with machinery (23.8 percent), cars (5.6 percent), and chemicals (6.4 percent). See Eurostat (Comext, Statistical regime 4) (2008), *European Union imports and exports by product grouping*, Brussels. In 2004, for instance, Europe provided 63.1 percent of Libya's imports, with 18.3 percent originating in Italy, 12.0 percent coming from Germany, and 4.1 percent from the United Kingdom — a total of 34.3 percent, or just around half of Europe's total exports to Libya. Europe absorbed 90.5 percent of its exports — 39.3 percent going to Italy, 18.3 percent going to Germany, and 13.3 percent going to Spain. In short, three countries absorbed 78.3 percent of Libya's exports to Europe and 70.9 percent of Libya's total exports. See Encyclopedia Britannica (2008),

member-states, it contrasts rather strangely with the allegedly normative nature of the European common foreign and security policy. Nor can it simply be a question of a desire on the part of the Commission to complete the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in its expanded form as the Union for the Mediterranean (EMP-UfM) or the Union's Mediterranean "ring of friends," now expanded as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), as Libya has made it clear that it has no real interest in either policy.[51] The ostensible reason for this is that Israel is a member of all three policy arenas but this is not the real reason for its refusal to join. In any case, remaining outside the Euro-Mediterranean club allows Libya to apply independent pressure to alter policies it dislikes, as it has done over the European arms embargo, for example, or when it refused to attend the first meeting in 2009 of the new Union for the Mediterranean.

Indeed, given the nature of both its polity and its economy, it would be surprising if it did join.[52] Even though it is evident that the Commission would be delighted if Libya were to join either

policy initiative — it has a purely passive role at present as an observer in the EMP-UfM, a status it was accorded in April 1999 by the Third Euro-Med Conference of Foreign Ministers in Stuttgart — Libya will neither accept the Community acquis nor engage in the economic challenges implicit in the ENP. This has meant that its formal relationship with the European Union has had to be negotiated under a separate arrangement, as a Framework Agreement, with negotiations on its content starting in November 2008, on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was signed in July 2007.[53]

In fact, despite the Commission's normative aspirations, the real explanation of the European Union's interests in Libya lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the substance of the Framework Agreement, as proposed in the documents currently under negotiation, and has far more to do with Europe's security preoccupations than with questions of economic or commercial engagement or of reforms of governance. They reflect the ongoing determination in Brussels to act as arbiter of security in the European periphery as part of an attempt to prevent inward migration, primarily from sub-Saharan Africa as well as from North Africa itself. To that extent, they reflect the underlying ambitions of European member-states as well, as their own national diplomatic engagements with Tripoli have demonstrated.

As such, of course, they also reflect a new paradigm in diplomatic affairs that has emerged since 2001, in which security issues are prioritized over the principles of cooperative engagement inhe-

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2007 Book of the Year, Chicago, p. 627.

[51] European Commission (DG Relex), *Concept Note Libya: Country strategy paper and National Indicative Programme 2011-2013*, available at ec.europa.eu/world/enp/mid.../final_concept_note_libya_en.pdf.

[52] The term was first used by Romano Prodi in introducing the Union's new European Neighbourhood Policy in 2002 and 2003, itself in part a response to the United States' Middle East Partnership Initiative. See, for example, his speech in Washington in June 2003, available at http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_2477_en.htm.

[53] European Commission (DG Relex), *op. cit.*

rent in the Barcelona Process — the ostensible principles behind Europe's external policies in the past. They mark, in short, the introduction of a new and more intensely realist approach to external policy, calling into question the degree to which normative ambitions, the very stuff of Europe's self-image, still inform and dominate the Union's approach to external relations. It is not that trade has ceased to be important or that economic engagement has been abandoned as a way of interacting with Europe's neighbors. Nor has the Union abandoned its concerns for governance as an integral part of essential reforms to improve the international security environment.

It is rather that these objectives, seen in the past as the very stuff of European policy, have been sidelined in favor of more overt security concerns. Economics are still important, of course, particularly given Libya's role as a major European energy supplier at a time when the Union is desperate to diversify its sources of hydrocarbon energy, governance far less so. But the new approach to the core substance of any external relationship, as exemplified by the Libyan example, is now firmly based in security policy toward both migration and transnational violence, whether or not this is expressly stated in diplomatic discourse. And, of course, this new approach offers new opportunities to Europe's partners to gain advantage as well. Trade then becomes a subsidiary encouragement to the security engagement, with member states' interests being the dominant theme; while the normative core of the Union's agenda —governance issues, together with the inevitable

conditionality requirements, whether positive or negative in nature — far less so.[54]

From Libya's point of view, the relationships with the European Union and with European states again emphasizes the country's slide in the past two decades from its ideological preoccupations as far as the West is concerned toward a pragmatic opportunism. Thus it is quite prepared to play its role as one of the guardians in Europe's new border marches and seeks European investment in its infrastructure and oil and gas sectors. Ideological concerns have been elevated to the level of the leader's rhetoric as he visits France and Italy and receives a succession of leading European statesmen, starting with Italian premier Massimo D'Alema's visit in 1999 in the wake of his foreign minister, Lamberto Dini, who had visited Libya in the previous April, and Britain's Tony Blair's first visit in 2004. Nowadays, it is national interest that governs the substance of relations, not ideology.

The Italian case is perhaps the most blatant in terms of the issues that have driven it. Top of the list must be the issue of irregular migration, as Italy has been the target of increasing migration flows from Libya ever since the beginning of the decade.[55] Most of the migrants are from sub-

[54] See Joffé E.G.H. (2008), "The European Union, democracy, and counter-terrorism in the Maghrib," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46, 1 (January 2008).

[55] Italy has also tried to establish formal repatriation relations with Libya, according to the MIREM project at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies in the European University Institute in Florence (http://www.mirem.eu/donnees/accords/libye). Libya signed a repatriation agreement on December 13, 2000, which came

Saharan Africa, having come to Libya as part of the waves of immigrants stimulated after Libya's decision in 1998 to realign itself with Africa, rather than the Arab world and to open its borders to African immigrants. In 2008, up to 40,000 migrants sought access to Italy from Libya, 15 percent of them attempting the hazardous sea crossing to Pantellaria, Lampedusa, or Sicily. This should be compared with the 10,000 irregular migrants arrested by the Italian authorities in 2007; 11 to 12 percent of all irregular migrants arrived by sea.[56]

Italy has undertaken a whole series of measures to counter these flows, which in the past often seem to have been exploited by Libya for political purposes. Thus, in the years before the European Union's arms embargo against Libya was removed on September 23, 2004, the migrant flows were used as an argument in Tripoli's representations to Rome that it should take the lead — as it eventually did — in persuading its

partners in the Union to remove the arms embargo. Italy also maintained joint patrols with Libya as a confidence-building measure and to encourage Tripoli into a more cooperative frame of mind, lending it vessels for the purpose before the embargo was lifted in an attempt to reduce migrant flows. The prioritizing of this objective in the Framework Agreement is thus as much an initiative to encourage Libya to relieve the migration pressure on Italy as protecting the European border.

Italy has also had a further problem with Libya, which has increased pressure for improved bilateral relations — its colonial past. This has now been resolved by an agreement — a "treaty of friendship, partnership and cooperation" — drawn up between the Berlusconi government and the Qadhafi regime in which Italy has promised to pay $5 billion over a 20-year period to resolve all remaining problems between the two countries. It was signed in Benghazi on August 30, 2008, and ratified by Italy on February 3, 2009 and by Libya on March 1, 2009.

As Claudia Gazzini has pointed out,[57] the agreement is not, as has usually been claimed, an agreement about reparations for Italy's colonial past. No payment is made to Libya, instead the Italian government will finance projects in Libya to be carried out entirely by Italian companies, with Libya providing the land needed and essential local raw materials free of charge. It has not sparked similar agreements elsewhere, nor is it expected to do so. Instead it is a statement about a post-colonial relationship between Italy and Libya, which is based on cooperation for mutual

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into operation in 2002, a further agreement on July 3, 2003, a memorandum of understanding on January 18, 2006, and a police cooperation agreement on December 29, 2007. At least one of these agreements concerned the abortive project to create Italian-financed and Libyan-controlled "repatriation camps" in Libya, a project that was abandoned over human rights concerns. See Paoletti E. (2008), *op. cit*. Malta signed a police cooperation agreement with Libya in 1984, which came into operation in 2001, and Britain has signed a memorandum of understanding, connected with the British desire to deport persons suspected of terrorism as well as illegal migrants, on October 18 2005, but it is not in operation because of British domestic legal issues. Spain and Ukraine are negotiating about cooperation agreements, too.

[56] Gazzini C. (2009), "Assessing Italy's Grande Gesto to Libya," *Middle East Online,* March 16, 2009.

[57] *Ivi.*

advantage and on the belief in cooperation over other issues, such as migration and energy — ENI, the Italian state energy company, has just concluded some very advantageous renegotiations of its energy contracts in Libya.

At the same time, domestic considerations can profoundly affect foreign policy concerns, as both Bulgaria and Switzerland have learned to their discomfort. Bulgaria has, for many years, provided medical personnel to Libya, an agreement stretching back to the Cold War. In 1998, however, five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor were accused of having deliberately infected 413 children with HIV, with the children subsequently developing AIDS. The accusation was almost certainly a panic response to the ferocious anger of the children's parents in Benghazi, where the incident had occurred, for Cyrenaica has long been hostile to the Qadhafi regime, which has alternated between repression and appeasement as a response. Subsequent independent evidence demonstrated that the majority of the accused had not even been employed in the hospital concerned when the infections took place. The infections themselves had almost certainly been caused by poor hygiene, something which the regime could not bring itself to admit.

In consequence, the subsequent court procedures dragged on over the next nine years, with the accused being repeatedly found guilty and being sentenced to death. Eventually, if the face of the displeasure of European public opinion and official European Union intervention, the six accused were pardoned and allowed to return to Bulgaria against humanitarian payments from the Euro-pean Commission, said to be worth $400 million, to the families of the victims. The persistence of the regime to both maintain accusations that were not sustainable and to oblige the payment of compensation reflected its pragmatic anxieties over domestic discontent and its opportunistic exploitation of Europe's desire to end the matter peaceably and humanely. Indeed, the potential protection that can be offered by the Union was made clear by its actions in this case.

The lack of such protection was highlighted in 2009 when Switzerland, a non-Union member despite its membership of the European Economic Area, became the target of Libyan anger after one of Colonel Qadhafi's sons was detained in 2008 in Geneva and handled roughly by the police. Despite an abject apology by the Swiss federal presidency in August, two Swiss nationals detained in Libya had not been released by the end of the year and massive fines had been levied on them. Oil deliveries to Switzerland from Libya were interrupted and Colonel Qadhafi called on the United Nations to divide Switzerland into its component ethno-linguistic parts and donate them to surrounding countries. The reason for such treatment was both a desire to assert Libya's recovered international status, after the humiliations of the Lockerbie crisis and the years of American hostility, and to demonstrate that it would not tolerate demeaning behavior toward the person of the Libyan leader or his family. Switzerland, lacking any real leverage against Libya, made an ideal example for the wider world. Switzerland provided the ideal opportunity to do this for it could hardly take significant retaliatory action against Libya whilst

a weak federal system could only be embarrassed by any attempt it made to resolve the crisis through compromise — a perfect example of the utility of opportunism in foreign policy in the modern world for small states.

The Arab and African worlds

The Arab and African worlds demonstrate another aspect of Libyan policy in action. Both are arenas for ideological experiment, the second being chosen when the first failed to live up to Libya's expectations. Yet both are also opportunities for alliance-building through aid in order to enhance Libya's regional standing. This, in turn, demonstrates how opportunist pragmatism supplements ideology in achieving desired policy outcomes. And both demonstrate the inability of Libya's intensely personalized policy institutions to achieve the real outcomes that the country has sought, as other states exploit or reject it in terms of their own national interests.

Given the nature of the Libyan revolution as a statement about the country's place within the Arab world and Colonel Qadhafi's self-identification as an Arab nationalist and the heir of the Egyptian leader, Gamel Abdel Nasser, after his death in 1970, the Arab world has always played a central role within Libyan perceptions of its foreign relations. This has led to Libya's repeated attempts at regional integration, with Egypt and Sudan in 1970, with Tunisia in 1974, and with Syria in 1980. Nor have such attempts been limited to Middle Eastern States, as the initiative to Tunisia demonstrated; there were also similar attempts with Chad in 1980 and Morocco in 1984.[58]

There is no doubt that the driver for these initiatives was ideological and they were not always met with great success. None of the initiatives materialized as other regional states quickly understood and distrusted their implications and, in one case at least, the consequent hostility led to war. In July 1977, Egypt and Libya fought a short border war until Algeria stepped in as the guarantor of Libya's territorial integrity, warning Egypt off from continuing its aggression. In some cases, the initiatives were heavily tinged with pragmatic considerations, for in North Africa at least — and even in the Sahel — they had more to do with influencing regional politics than with ideological presuppositions, an issue that is discussed below.

The upshot of all these initiatives was to profoundly disillusion the Libyan leader and his close advisors about the reliability of fellow Arab governments. Thus, although the ideal of Arab nationalism was preserved as a popular and populist option, its utility as an instrument of high policy was progressively abandoned over a period of 20 years. Colonel Qadhafi conversely became an ever more explicit critic of the policies of Arab governments, particularly over the issue of Palestine and the failure of the Arab League and of Arab states to challenge the Israeli state. Ideological prejudices continued to inform this approach, even as ideology was being abandoned in other foreign policy arenas.

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[58] St. John R.B. (2008), *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152, 184.

Thus, in the wake of the 1993 Oslo Accords and the subsequent declaration of the Palestinian National Authority in July 1994 as a proto-sovereign governing entity, in May 1995 Libya expelled all its 13,000 Palestinian immigrants and refugees along with a major drive to rid the country of unwanted refugees on the grounds that they now had a state to which they could return. The Israeli authorities did not agree and, for almost two years, the refugees existed in miserable conditions on the border with Egypt before they were allowed to return to Libya. By this time, too, Libya was smarting from what it perceived as a betrayal by its Arab brothers in not supporting it against the sanctions imposed by the United Nations in connection with the Lockerbie crisis and, in 1998, it suddenly announced that the ideal of Arab Unity had been replaced in the official iconography by African Unity instead. Since that time, Libya has continued to be part of the Arab League, although in recent years the Libyan leader has repeatedly threatened to leave the organization and Arab nationalism has played an ever-decreasing role in Libya's foreign policy imperatives.

The Libyan decision to prioritize African unity instead coincided with a decision by African leaders in September 1997 to ignore the United Nations-imposed embargo on air travel to Libya, a development that signaled the imminent collapse of the whole sanctions regime. It also forced Western states to contemplate other approaches to the Libyan issue, a development that was to culminate in the British approach to Libya to resolve the difficulties over the Lockerbie affair. Yet this reversal to a dominant African

dimension to Libya's foreign policy merely reflected a concern that in the past had played a major role in foreign policy, even if subordinated to the imperative of Arab unity.

Indeed, this was probably the reason why Africa had been a major concern of the Qadhafi regime very early on, after it came to power in 1969.[59] Its interest in part mirrored that of its predecessor, particularly over the Aozou Strip in Northern Chad, which a Libyan military column briefly penetrated in 1955. But, initially, revolutionary Libya's interests in Africa were far wider, ranging from a successful campaign to dissuade African states from maintaining relations with Israel to widespread intervention in African economies and support for radical anti-Western states and national liberation movements, such as the African National Congress.[60] It also sought to use its oil wealth to achieve its policy objectives and to extend its influence, particularly in West Africa.

In the end, of course, Libyan policy in Africa became rather messily unstuck and its early successes were reversed. Although by 1973, 20 African states had severed relations with Israel, a decade later diplomatic relations were being steadily restored. Libyan largesse and commercial interest had also been revealed to often have negative connotations for domestic stability and a range of specific interventions had either failed

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[59] Joffé E.G.H. (2005), Libya's Saharan destiny," *Journal of North African Studies*, 10, 3-4 (September-December 2005).

[60] St. John R.B. (1988), "The Libyan debacle in sub-Saharan Africa," in Lemarchand R. (ed.)(1988), *The Green and the Black: Qadaffi's policies in Africa*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington and Indianapolis), pp. 125-138.

spectacularly or had excited great suspicions amongst neighboring states. Thus Libyan support, both diplomatic and military, for the Idi Amin regime in Uganda had resulted in Libya's armed forces being humiliated by Tanzania's People's Defense Force in early 1979.[61] Support for the Polisario Front in the Western Sahara after 1975 had been transformed into hostility at the prospect of African "balkanization" less than a decade later as Libya sought an alliance with its former enemy Morocco.

Even the initially successful intervention in Chad, first in occupying the Aozou Strip in late 1972, then in offering support to Goukouni Oueddei's Gouvernement de l'Unité National Transitoire (GUNT) in 1980 came apart in 1984 under the combined pressures of Hissan Habré's seizure of power and French intervention. The Libyan riposte in 1986, when its army in the Aozou Strip first attempted to reassert its position inside Chad and later to protect itself from the onslaughts of the Chadian army inside the Strip, was calamitous. Eventually, in the short campaign that followed, the Libyan army was comprehensively defeated. In December 1986 the government in N'Djamena launched an offensive

northwards and, by January 2, 1987, had captured Fada oasis from the Libyan troops, now pushed to the forefront of the resistance. The capture of Habre's own hometown, Faya-Largeau, followed soon afterwards, once the air-support base at Ouadi Doum had been destroyed in a lightning attack. By then the retreat had become a rout and over 4,000 Libyan soldiers are estimated to have died in the struggle between January and March 1987, with over $1.7 billion-worth of arms being abandoned or destroyed. The losses at Ouadi Doum alone included $500 million-worth of Soviet-supplied aircraft.[62]

As a result of Algerian and Moroccan mediation, Libya was persuaded to put its claim to the Aozou Strip before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, where it had previously been successful in winning adjudications in its favor.[63] This time it was not as successful as in the past, for its sophisticated arguments based on historical precedent were swept aside by the court in favor of a reliance on legal precedent[64] in terms of an exchange of letters in 1955 between France and the newly independent government of Libya, in which the instruments defining Libya's international boundaries were defined.[65] Nevertheless,

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[61] Tanzanian reports of the decisive Battle of Lukaya in southern Uganda claimed that the force suffered 600 dead, and only 57 prisoners were eventually repatriated via Algeria. Remaining Libyan forces only escaped destruction because Tanzanian forces, on instructions from Tanzania's president, Julius Nyrere, allowed them to flee. Folz W.J. (1988), "Libya's military power," in Lemarchand R. (ed.)(1988), *The Green and the Black: Qaddafi's policies in Africa*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington and Indianapolis), pp. 62-63.

[62] Joffé E.G.H. (1996) "Chad: power vacuum or geo-political focus?," in Griffiths I., Hodder B.W., McLachlan K.S. and Schofield R.N. (eds.)(1996), *The geography of the landlocked states of Africa and Asia*, UCL Press (London).

[63] It had been able to gain favorable judgments in its maritime delimitations with Tunisia (1982) and Malta (1985).

[64] "Pacta sunt servanda" rather than "rebus sic standibus."

[65] Shaw M.N. (1997), "Peoples, territorialism and boundaries," *European Journal of International Law*, 8, 3, p. 481. There is an

the Qadhafi regime accepted the court's adverse judgment in 1992 and evacuated its forces from its last remaining base on Chadian soil. No doubt its disappointment had been partly assuaged by the fact that it had, in the last days of 1990, been instrumental in supporting Idris Deby in his successful attempt to overthrow the Habré regime, which had been responsible for its earlier humiliation. This, to some extent at least, must have eased the Libyan leader's sense of failure over his unsuccessful attempt to build political unity between Libya and Chad.

In short, Libya's political and diplomatic inter-ventions in sub-Saharan Africa in the early years of the Qadhafi regime all ended in spectacular failure. Nor was the situation in North Africa much better. Libya's relations with Egypt declined spectacularly from President Nasser's initial recognition of the Arab nationalist qualities of the new regime in 1969 and 1970 to the nadir of Egypt's short-lived border campaign of July 1977 and Colonel Qadhafi's disdain for Anwar Sadat's moves toward peace with Israel. On that occasion, Libya was only saved from full-scale Egyptian invasion by Algerian warnings to Cairo that such an act could invoke the 1975 Hassi Messaoud defensive alliance, drawn up between Algeria and Libya at the start of the Western Sahara conflict when both wished to counter Moroccan expansionism.[66] Relations with Sudan were in many respects a consequence of relations with Egypt and, after an uneasy alliance with the

Numayri regime, Libya opted to seek to replace it, a mistake that resulted in Sudan seeking Egyptian protection in 1976 and subsequently housing Libyan opposition groups, to Libya's evident discomfort.

Relations with Algeria also worsened after Libya decided that it no longer wished to see the "balkanization" of North Africa that might result if an independent Western Saharan state were to emerge out of Moroccan failure and the success of the Polisario Front. Algeria also disliked Libyan policy in Chad, where a political union had been declared in 1981 and Libyan troops had reinforced the indigenous authorities under Goukouni Oueddei. There was also the question of relations with Tunisia. After the failure of the proposed union at Jerba in 1974, there was a slow decline in relations to, first, Libyan support in 1980 for the Gafsa rebellion designed to oust President Bourguiba from office and then the crisis of August 1985, which would have resulted in another border war without Algerian interven-tion.

In part, these decisions also resulted from the failure of various attempts to create more perma-nent political links with both Algeria and Tunisia up to 1981 and from Libya's exclusion from the 1983 Treaty of Concord and Fraternity that Algeria offered to its neighbors, provided they resolved outstanding border disputes with it first. Libya, instead, had sought to rebuild its relations with Morocco, where diplomatic relations had been severed since 1985. In mid-1981, Colonel Qadhafi had used the commander of the Sabha

interesting first-hand account of the way in which the negoti-ations were carried out in Ben-Halim M.A (1994), *Libya: the years of hope*, AAS Media (London), pp. 165-171.

[66] Deeb M.-J. (1991), *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

military region, Colonel Masud Abdulhafidh,[67] who had been responsible for supplying arms to the Polisario Front, as a special envoy to Rabat to reassure Morocco that support for the Western Saharan movement would stop and diplomatic relations had been restored. Now, in a riposte to its exclusion from the Algerian alliance, Libya joined King Hassan's Arab-African Union in August 1984.[68]

The alliance only lasted two years, falling apart after King Hassan had publicly welcomed the then Israeli foreign minister, Shimon Perez, to Morocco. But for Morocco, it had served its purpose for it had detached Libya from the Algerian embrace and reduced the threat from the continuing war in the Western Sahara. It had also contributed toward the isolation of Libya, now on poor terms with the key regional powers, Egypt and Algeria, and about to face defeat in Chad as a result of combined French and American hostility. France had been concerned about Libyan influence in its neo-colonial West African domain and the United States was anxious to discover any arena in which it could successfully downgrade Libyan expectations of an independent diplomatic role, not to speak of ridding itself of the Qadhafi regime, largely because of its alleged association with terrorism in the Middle East.[69] Attitudes such as these ushered in the isolation of the 1990s, in the wake

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[67] In an interesting comment on Libya's ties in Africa, Colonel Abdulhafidh was married to Goukouni Oueddei's sister.

[68] *Ibidem*, pp. 141-151.

[69] See St. John R.B. (2002), *Libya and the United States: two centuries of strife*, University of Pennsylvania Press (Philadelphia), pp. 101-124.

of the Lockerbie disaster in December 1988. The consequent decade of sanctions forced a major reformulation of Libyan foreign policy, which was to emerge after 1997 and to transform Libya's relationship with Africa, particularly with the Sahara and the Sahel.

It is this inversion that has revived Libyan interest in Africa, particularly in the Sahara and surrounding areas. In part, the failure of the Arab world to support Libya over its tussles with the United Nations over the Lockerbie affair and the attendant sanctions was a major factor. Yet, at the same time, Libya had never abandoned its African interests, maintaining its interests in *daw'a* in West Africa and in Uganda where close links began to be built with the Yoweri Museveni regime after it came to power in 1986. Links were also built with the government of Charles Taylor in Liberia after he came to power in 1997. However it was largely because the Qadhafi regime saw Africa as an arena in which it could breach the United Nations sanctions regime that Libyan interest switched so dramatically from the Arab world toward Africa in the mid-1990s.

This culminated in the formation of the Community of Saharan and Sahelian States (CEN-SAD or Comessa —the terms are interchangeable although there is a separate organization named "Comessa" as well) on February 18, 1998. Based in Libya, CEN-SAD brought together the Sahelian states of Sudan, Chad, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso with Libya at its head in a loose economic federation. Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco were initially observer members but have since become full members of the organization, as have other Sahelian and Central African states. Today

the organization groups together 23 different states.[70] The initiative recalls Libya's much earlier attempts in the 1970s to forge a federation of Saharan states, an initiative resisted then by Libya's North African neighbors. On this occasion, they were less well-placed to resist, given the failure of their own economic integration initiative, the Maghrib Arab Union (UMA). UMA had been formed in 1989, but was now virtually moribund largely because of Libya's refusal to cooperate as a result of what it saw as a North African betrayal in not supporting its against the United Nations sanctions regime, although the Western Sahara crisis between Morocco and Algeria also plays a role.

CEN-SAD is a genuine Libyan achievement, reflecting as it does Libya's ideological preference for regional integration but not threatening the independence of the states forming it. Libya has proposed a free trade zone at Misurata for Sahelian states, thus providing them with direct access to the Mediterranean in a replay of the pre-colonial trans-Saharan trade routes. There are proposals for a railway from Libya to Chad, as another device to open up the Sahara and the Sahel. This means that Libya has become a genuine power in the region, particularly as it has reoriented itself as an African state and, as part of the CEN-SAD charter requirements as well as its ideological commitment to being an African state, allowed free access for Sahelian and sub-Saharan African populations into Libya itself.

This had undesirable consequences, as the September 2000 riots in Zawiya and Tripoli made clear. The riots were provoked by growing tensions between the indigenous population and sub-Saharan Africans — estimates of the numbers of immigrants across the Sahara ranged from 1 to 2 million — and resulted in hundreds of deaths. This was not only a consequence of economic competition or social strain, but it was also a statement about levels of identity in Libya that still reflect family, tribe, state, Islam, and Arabism,[71] although the authorities have tried hard to demonstrate that there is no inherent incompatibility between Arabism and Libya's African identity. Despite the fact that many sub-Saharan Africans left Libya after the riots, as new controls were introduced, and Libya's reputation in Africa was severely dented, migrants have continued to come and now form a well of willing victims for smugglers into Europe. Despite these setbacks, Libya has continued to lay claim to its African destiny.

Later in 1998, Libya was also able to persuade the Organization of African Unity, meeting in July in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to vote to ignore United Nations travel sanctions on Libya unless Britain and the United States accepted proposals for the two named suspects in the Lockerbie case to be tried in a third country. Libya had lobbied very hard for this decision and had even paid the arrears in dues of several of the poorer African states to obtain African support. By the end of August, Libya's closest allies — Chad, Ethiopia, and Niger — had begun to visit Tripoli by air in a direct challenge to the sanctions regime. The

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[70] See www.cen-sad.org/aboutcensad.htm.

[71] Obeidi A. (2001), *Political culture in Libya*, Curzon (London), p. 198.

move was successful when, after intensive secret diplomacy by Saudi Arabia's ambassador in Washington, Prince Bandar, and South Africa's Nelson Mandela, Britain agreed to Libya's proposal, as did the United States. On April 6, 1999, the two suspects were handed over. The suspension of the United Nations sanctions followed shortly afterwards and Libya was able to rebuild its relations with the West.

Libya's success in obtaining African support for the project of reversing the sanctions regime and resolving the Lockerbie crisis also encouraged Colonel Qadhafi to seek to apply his ideological nostrums to the continent — to considerable disquiet in Pretoria — where there had been considerable sympathy for Libya because of its past sustained support for the anti-apartheid struggle — and Cairo, for South Africa and Egypt have always seen themselves as the continental hegemonic powers, often in alliance with states such as Nigeria and Senegal. Nonetheless, the colonel proposed the restructuring of the Organization for African Unity as the African Union, based in Libya. The idea was endorsed by African leaders as a first stage toward continent-wide economic and political integration. However, at the new African Union's founding conference in Pretoria in July 2000, Libya was marginalized and excluded from a leadership role either in the new organization itself or in its major project, the New Economic Plan for African Development (NEPAD).

This failure did not prevent Libya from initiatives in other directions, quite apart from its intervention in the crisis in Liberia, undertaken originally because of Charles Taylor's evident

anti-Americanism. Perhaps the most notable was the aid given to Zimbabwe as Robert Mugabe's government's crisis with the veterans movement and the white farming community became more acute. Libya provided Zimbabwe with aid in 2000 and 2001, partly in terms of oil supply and partly in the form of goods. The sum of $100 million in 2000 was a gift; the sum of $360 million in 2001, however, was a loan and Libya apparently obtained significant assets in property and land in Zimbabwe as a result.

Libya suspended its aid, however, as it began to realize the very poor international reactions its actions had generated and as it realized that the Mugabe government would simply not be able to reimburse it. Libya has also attempted to act, with partial success, as a mediator in African disputes, although its attempts to intervene in the Great Lakes Crisis or the Eritrean-Ethiopian War have had little success, while the United States has been determined to exclude it and Egypt from the settlement of Sudan's civil war. It has also sought, often unsuccessfully, to aid its friends, such as Felix Patisse in the Central African Republic, thus repeating the pattern of the past in which such interventions have usually damaged its international standing.

Thus even today, Libya's foreign policy initiatives in Africa have not been an unmitigated success. The major attempt to enshrine Colonel Qadhafi as an African statesman has been blocked by South Africa and Nigeria, as has the Libyan attempt to transport its ideological priority of state integration. Libya's attempts at pacific mediation, too, have had little success, partly because of the suspicions its past radical behavior has

engendered. Often this reflects the unsuccessful application of ideology to foreign policy choices with both state and nonstate actors but it also reflects the irrationality with which that policy can be applied, because of the close interconnection between domestic political structures and foreign policy goals. Colonel Qadhafi has never been able to convince his compatriots that Arab unity and Arab-African unity is the same thing. Nor, indeed, are his external partners convinced of this or of Libya's essential good faith in its foreign dealings.

Yet, in the one area in which Libya has been able to apply pragmatic approaches to realize rational objectives contributing toward its own security — the Sahara and the Sahel — it has been successful. In part this is because the core Sahelian states of Chad, Niger and, to a lesser extent, Sudan and Burkina Faso are beholden to it for past aid and the promise of present support. In part it is because the project, in replicating the past, offers them advantages as well. The Sahel-Saharan Investment Bank could become an important additional source of funding for development, and the proposed trans-Saharan railway has obvious significance, together with the bonded free trade zone in Misurata. At the same time, North African states, although initially worried by what was to emerge, have been reassured.

It is also the case that Libya now cannot be ignored in Saharan and Sahelian affairs for it has become a permanent factor in the calculations of regional states and in the growing complexity of Saharan affairs. It has played a fitful role in such affairs in the past, from its interventions in Chad to its support for the Polisario Front to which it supplied arms from Sebha in the 1970s. There were even allegations of the use of its territory for the smuggling of weaponry into Algeria during the decade-long civil war there in the 1990s, for it sits across some of the major regional smuggling routes. Now that the Sahara and the Sahel have been designated a potential home for international terrorism by the United States, with material and training aid being provided to states seen as being under threat, Libya's Saharan role has, once again, become part of the calculations of the West.

The wider world: the BRICs[72]

There is, of course, a world beyond Africa, the Arab world and the West with which Libya will have to increasingly engage. Indeed, significant moves started in that direction at the beginning of this decade and, in some cases, had been initiated even earlier. Fidel Castro, of Cuba, had visited Libya in 1977, beginning a longstanding relationship between the two countries, which still endures. It also foreshadowed similar relationships with other Latin American and Caribbean radical regimes, such as Nicaragua. Radicals from the region were also invited to Libya in the 1970s. Brazil, strangely enough, has never figured very high on Libya's list of interests, probably because, unlike the Central American and Caribbean states, there had been no ideological engagement.

During the troubled 1980s and 1990s, Libya's attempts to build relationships in the region

[72] Brazil, Russia, India, and China and, by extension, Latin America, South-East Asia, and the Caucasus and Central Asia

withered but were revived after 2001 in the wake of a visit from leading politicians from Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent. The Libyan leader offered access to a $1 billion development fund, an immediate grant of $21.5 million, and the promise of purchasing bananas at above market prices. Some years later, in 2007, the Libyan leader renewed contacts with Daniel Ortega, by then re-elected president of Nicaragua, to Washington's concern. There have also been contacts with Venezuela over concerted action in the field of oil and gas prices but as yet there is no concerted policy between the two states outside their role in OPEC.[73]

The Caribbean and Latin America, in short, has not been a major arena for Libya's political action and what initiatives there have been have reflected longstanding ideological interests rather than the pragmatic interests of the Libyan state. It is worth noting that there has been no real engagement with the three major states in the Latin American cone — Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. It is clear that this has not yet attracted Libyan policymakers, even in ideological terms, despite the growing importance of the BRICs as a group around which a multi-polar world might eventually be constructed — to the West's great disadvantage.

The same cannot be said for Libya's relations either with China and South East Asia or with Russia. The current relationship with China dates from July 2001, when the then Chinese foreign minister made a formal visit to the country. He was followed almost a year later in April 2002 by the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin, and by the

signature of a series of agreements including a railway deal worth $40 million and an agreement to open up the Libyan hydrocarbons sector to Chinese companies. The visit did not, however, end Libya's links with Taiwan, whose oil company CPC Corporation concluded an exploration and production share deal in April 2007. North Korea is suspected of having been involved in Libya's abortive nuclear program before 2003. The Philippines also established normal relations in 2006 after decades of mutual hostility because of Libya's involvement in the Mindanao rebellion.[74]

With Russia, relations had been poor in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, not least because Colonel Qadhafi had supported the anti-Gorbachev Communist-led coup in 1991. Russia also had up to $4 billion-worth of outstanding debts with Libya and had ceased to import Libyan crude as it had during the Soviet era. These subdued relations lasted up to 2007, when moves began to improve relations. In April 2008, among his last duties as Russian president, Vladimir Putin visited Libya. During his visit, major contracts involving expenditures of up to $10 billion were signed for arms and infrastructure projects, and the outstanding debt issue was resolved. Since then, Libya has lent a willing ear to Russian proposals for a "Gas OPEC" designed to create producer power in the world's gas markets to parallel the successes of the 1970s in OPEC itself. It remains to be seen how far this relationship will progress, but it has certainly given Libya a greater freedom of action in international affairs than it has ever had.

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[73] St. John R.B. (2008), *op. cit.*, p. 236.

[74] *Ibidem*, pp. 232-233.

9 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is little doubt that since Libya realized that it had to accept the reality of hegemonic stability under the world's single hyper-power in the 1990s, it has made great strides in readjusting to a world very different from that which greeted the Great September Revolution in September 1969. The basis of Libya's foreign policy has swung full circle, from being dominated by ideology to a preoccupation with opportunistic pragmatism. Ideology itself has been relegated to the margins of Africa and the Arab world; in the former case because of the Libyan leader's ambitions as a statesman and in the latter as an expression of his distain. Neither region impinges on Libya's essential economic concerns nor on its policy interests; both are personal concerns of its leader instead.

Indeed, it could be argued that the foreign policy process in Libya is about to undergo a further evolution. Already the dominant ideological cast of the 1970s and 1980s has been replaced by the pragmatism of the 1990s and of the early 21st century, just as the primary targets of Libyan attention have been reversed from anti-imperialism and the developing world toward the West. Now, it seems, the major actor in the foreign policy arena, the Libyan leader himself, together with his intimate circle of advisers, is beginning to recast this central role as the actual process of policy articulation is increasingly professionalized. Colonel Qadhafi's recent statements about global issues no longer reflect an acute concern over simply Libya's role within them. Instead he increasingly adopts a position above the interplay of state interest and attitude, perhaps because the major issues and strategies of

the past seem resolved, thus providing him with the leisure for a more detached and contemplative approach as the professional bureaucracy deals with tactical issues that arise.

This has been increasingly evident in the public events in which he has participated in France, Italy, and Africa in the past year, not to speak of his recent appearance at the United Nations. They have all been characterized by a quality of generalization that no longer primarily addresses national interest, whether pragmatic or ideological. There are also hints, in recent policy decisions that — apart from the recent crisis with Switzerland, which seems to have touched upon family honor rather than issues of state — the policy process has acquired an automacy quite unlike the past, in which a professional bureaucracy increasingly sets the pace and handles negotiation. There have also been hints in recent years, revived again in recent months, that the institutional, political, and executive processes in Libya are to be formalized in ways that will render the *jamahiri* system irrelevant as Libya enters the modern age. And that may release the Libyan leader to philosophize the processes of diplomacy and international relations while permitting Libya — the state — to ground itself in the practicalities of pragmatic national interest.

What, then, does all this mean to states that do engage with Libya? One clear conclusion is that Colonel Qadhafi has little intention of changing the internal nature of his regime and will only do so if there is an irresistible external imperative to make him. Given the fact that the United States is the only power that could impel Libya in such a direction, in theory, Washington could force a

change in Libya's domestic policies by sustained pressure over governance and human rights. However, to do so might cause adverse reactions against American companies operating in Libya, especially if oil prices remain high. A better approach would be to encourage diplomatic and educational contacts in the hope of creating an elite that would embrace openly closer relations with Europe and the United States once the Libyan leader abandons control of the Libyan state. Increased tourism and trade would form part of such an initiative.

It may also be that an opportunity for such change may occur sooner rather than later, for there is considerable ideological and political ferment inside Libya at present. Nobody knows how the struggle for leadership is going to be resolved although there is evidence that the colonel himself realizes the need for resolution even if he remains hesitant about how it should occur. There is, however, a real possibility that a new constitutional structure may emerge inside the country in the near future. There are already plans for a wholesale restructuring of the economy in place. It only remains for the colonel to approve them. Of course, the personalized nature of policy in Libya means that it may never happen, as Libya's interminable negotiations with the European Union make clear, but the fact that it might have been contemplated increases the possibility that it will eventually see the light of day.

What is clear is that Libya is desperate to modernize after the long years of lean sanctions, even if the expectations by international compa-nies of the potential of Libya's oil and gas sectors have been disappointed of late. It is also the case that Libya, as a result of the sanctions regime, is well aware of the massive potential of the United States in world affairs, even if the BRICS might be carving out a subsidiary place as well. Libya also espouses Western policies on trans-national violence and, in these respects, has moved into the pro-Western camp, even if the feathers of its self-image can be easily ruffled. All this would suggest that constructive engagement, rather than containment, is the approach that will best serve Western interests with Libya in the future and ensure security within the Mediterranean, one of the key trade routes upon which Western prosperity depends.

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