



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EXTERNAL INTERESTS IN THE POST-GHADDAFI LIBYAN GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

It was expected that the international intervention championed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the ouster of the erstwhile Libyan head of State, Muammar Gaddafi would bring stability and peaceful co-existence in Libya. On the contrary, peace and stability seem to have eluded the country as sporadic conflicts by splinter groups have become predominant in the Libyan equation fueled by a number of external countries. The study therefore, examines the political economy of these external interests and how they have contributed in exacerbating and prolonging the war. Anchored on the theories of Local Destabilization and Competitive Interventions, the study adopted the qualitative method which utilized secondary sources of data that includes textbooks, journal articles, previous field researches, workshop papers, and news media and internet sources. These were content analyzed to draw valid inference. Findings show that the external factors involved in the post-Gaddafi Libyan conflict have varied interests which are economic, ideological, religious and military-strategic and these have contributed in fueling and prolonging the conflicts; ultimately, leading to further destabilization, displacements and exploitation of the Libyan State. The study recommends that it is only genuine intervention by mediators that can salvage the Libyan State from insecurity and instability and the brink of collapse.

Key Words: External Actors, Interest, Political Economy, Instability, Insecurity.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Since the ouster and death of the erstwhile Libyan leader, Maumar Ghadaffi in 2011 the Libyan crisis has increasingly become a theatre of external actors in the domestic dispute. This has placed the Libyan conflict at the front burner of international discourse and becoming an issue of global security importance. The nature of external intervention in the Libyan debacle is such that actors are mainly prodded by their individual objectives to tilt the outcomes of the transition process to actualize their political and economic interests. This explains why each of the external actor leans its support to either the faction of the Parliament in Tobruk led by Khalifa Haftar, or the Presidential Council headed by Fayeze al-Serraj in Tripoli (Mezram & Varvelli, 2017). The meddlesomeness of these external parties to the Libyan political transition since the demise of Colonel Gaddafi in 2011 has rather than abate the conflict, heightened the fragmentation and polarization in spite of the efforts made by the United Nations to create enabling environment via engaging the local actors (Libya Tribune, 2021).

Foreign intervention in domestic conflict ought to mediate a ceasefire and instill a post-war confidence building measures; however, in the case of Libya the conflict has lasted for over eight years, because to a large extent, the players do not represent a unified objective, but dispersed interests. Contrary to conventional wisdom in conflict intervention and mediation, the mediators themselves have become competing parties mediating among competing local factions thereby further factionalizing the conflict resulting in the elongation of the conflict and instability in the post-Gaddafi Libya (Al-Jaroushi, 2023).

The above analogy corroborates available literature on the Libyan debacle that rationalizes the supposition that external intervening states in many occasions rather contribute in mitigating tension, complicate the conflict and make its resolution more intractable. Thus, such biased external actors prod the warring factions' preference for continuing the war over a negotiation and peaceful settlement (Akcinaroglu & Radziszewski, 2005). Generally speaking, foreign intervention in internal conflicts influence the duration of civil wars whereby if they support peaceful settlement, the war would be shortened, but in a situation where they support diverse and competing interests, fighting would be prolonged (Balch-Lindsay & Andrew, 2000) as being experienced in the present-day Libya. Interestingly, where the cessation of hostilities and peaceful settlement does not align with the interest of the external actors, they contribute in playing the spoilers' game and play active role in scuttling any peace process using their local allies in the conflict (Stedman, 1997).

A careful examination of the post-Gaddafi's Libyan conflict provides ample evidence showing that in spite of the many attempts at international mediation between the warring factions, the untoward activities of external interference has in many ways swayed the mediators' objectives (Watanabe, 2019). The Libyan case has become much more complicated in that apart from scuttling the peace process, the external interlopers have gone



as far as providing local warring factions with military support, sending foreign fighters and mercenaries alike all taking advantage of the absence of a strong central authority to trade with the conflict (Sukhankin, 2020). Besides, even the immediate neighbouring countries who could have been helpful in the peace process are themselves active players in the conflict making the Libyan conflict case a more nuanced complex scenario. Therefore, the specific objectives of this study are fashioned to:

1. identify the various foreign actors in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance.
2. explore the political economy of the external interests in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance.
3. ascertain the extent to which these external interests have contributed in exacerbating and prolonging the Libyan war.

This study attempts to answer the following question: How did the international intervention affect the extension of the conflict in post-Gaddafi Libya? To answer this question, the study will use the theory of domestic destabilization to understand the motives of external parties. The theory of competitive interventions will also be used, which explains how the intervention affects the extension of civil conflict. The study will depend on the qualitative methodology of analysis by linking theories and literature to the case study that will be discussed.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical frameworks adopted for the study are the theories of Local Destabilization and Competitive Interventions. A combination of these two theories gives us complete explanation of the political economy of external interventions in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance.

2.1. The Theory of Local Destabilization

The theory of local destabilization is closely linked to history of the relationship between the United States and the erstwhile socialist countries, especially in the Caribbean, where the latter's ideological interests were in persistent conflict with that of the United States (Mars, 1998). The theory finds its expression in the Libyan conflict in that where foreign policies, which project countries interests clash with those of others and where they become irreconcilable, there is tendency to jettison diplomatic means and toe the line of destabilization as an option to achieve their ultimate foreign policy objectives. Within this milieu, extreme clash of interest could propel government authorities in a country to initiate actions to either overthrow or destabilize the political leadership of another (Stodden, 2012). Conflict of interests can be classified into three major types: security, economic, and ideological conflicts of interest between the "target state and the status quo state" (Stodden, 2012).



Destabilization theory also throw light on a model of foreign policy that aims at intentionally interfere in a country by working with local actors to create instability in the target state (Manley, 1982). The core objective of such policy of destabilization is to create a discomforting environment that can drive the citizenry into changing its political leadership (Merom, 1990). Such discomforting environments include: igniting and worsening the economic, political and military tensions and climate in the target country, so as to divide and weaken the target state government as well as push towards tilt the existing balance of power in the target country in favour of its local opposing ally within the country (Bisley, 2004). In sum, the conflict of interest between the intervening foreign state and the would-be destabilized state instigates the inclination towards the choice of policy of destabilization of the existing local stability, as expressed in conflict which reinforced persistent conflict between parties to the conflict.

The Theory of Local Destabilization explains the post-Gaddafi conflict in Libya, in that the external actors' interests foreshadow their activities in their target state which became their driving force for supporting their preferred faction in the conflict. Each of the foreign players in the Libyan crisis are either driven by ideological, economic or religious interest spurring their support for a faction as a tool of destabilization of the Libyan political space in the bid to actualize their avowed interests. This being the case, given their due various interests in the domestic affairs of Libya, these foreign actors tend to be comfortable with prolongation of the conflict their interests. In order to further our horizon of understanding of the association foreign intervention with the duration of the Libyan conflict, wet switch on to the theory of competitive interventions.

2.2 The Theory of Competitive Interventions

The theory of Competitive Interventions seeks to explain dynamics of competitive intervention amongst external actors in a country's civil war. Here, the theory describes how competing of external parties from different countries simultaneously send military assistance to the diverse local combatants in a civil war. The action of these external actors is regarded as competitive because their intervention is channeled towards securing their competing interests through the dissidents. The action of these external parties is to orchestrate a balance of power between the parties in the conflict (Anderson, 2019). According to Anderson (2019), competitive interference is determinant factor for the length of period of a conflict in ways:

First, Competitive intervention 'delays the convergence of local combatants' expectations by lowering the expected costs of war'. As the external parties lend their support to the prevailing war via provision of weapons, funds, among others, they seem to relieve the warring parties of the burden and limitations inherent on reliance on of sourcing local resources. Having been relieved of the greater cost of the combat by their foreign sponsors,



their inclination to continue the war rather than sue for negotiation and peace becomes higher in the face of continued foreign assistance.

On the second note, Competitive intervention encourages the continuation of war because it tends to balance the capabilities of the combatants. The armed and funding support received from external actors has the likelihood of creating capability parity among the warring factions, resulting in increased battlefield clashes. As the civil war combatants have received the incentives that creates the what seems to be the condition of equilibrium in their capabilities, there are therefore driven to seek more favourable advantage over others, thus in other to have an advantage over their counterparts in the war, they take extra steps and measures to secure information such as, the opponents' ability and how daring, prepared and determined they are. On the whole, the equilibrium status of the combatants on either side results in lengthening the conflict as well as heightening the relative value of the war.

Thirdly, Competitive interference makes the bargaining process more complex by increasing information asymmetry. In other words, the economy of information to more monitor the quantum and quality of foreign assistance inhibits the efforts of the combatants to assess the real capability of their adversary. These include knowledge on the ability of the extent to which an adversary can effectively deploy the received capabilities, exploit military technology, or implement strategy. These in themselves complicate their assessment of their probable victory, which in turn heightens the relative value of combat.

Applying the theory of Competitive Intervention to the post-Gaddafi Libyan conflict, it is evident that the activities external interventions have contributed in no small measure to prolongation of civil war. This appears in form of military intervention, military aid, and economic assistance to the various opposing forces (Regan, 2002). The consistent supply of military wares to the warring factions increases their capacity to prosecute the war and their inclination to continue in the war thereby prolonging the war (Leites & Wolf, 1970). Thus, external resources play enormous part in the burgeoning of military capabilities of the recipient warring factions, including their ability to survive. It follows that where the conflicting parties have two or more foreign sponsors, they secure increased capability to continue the fight for a very long time (Sinno, 2011). On the whole, the theory of Competitive Intervention provides appreciable explanation on how external financing contributes to the extension of the conflict.

3.0. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study adopts a qualitative research method within the ambit of historical-descriptive design, which is a suitable analytical tool that provides the platform for a critical evaluation of the political economy of external interests in the post-Gaddafi Libyan State conflict and governance. This explains why historical design is quite suitable to this discourse that delves into the past, analyzes the present and providing insight into the future drive towards conflict



resolution in Libya harnessing robust qualitative data, which include critical examination of assortment of written literature and documents that could provide credible description and analysis associated with the phenomena under study. Thus, scholarly textbooks, print media, journal articles, seminar/workshop papers, working papers, official documents, previous field research works were consulted and content-analyzed in accordance with the set objectives to draw valid and plausible results and inference for the study.

4.0. DISCOURSES

4.1. Foreign Actors in the post-Gaddafi Libyan Governance.

The range of external actors in the post-Gaddafi Libyan civil war could be classified into two viz-a-viz primary external actors and secondary external actors. The primary external actors in the conflict include: Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey while the secondary actors in Libyan conflict include France, Italy, Jordan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, all of which throw their weight behind Haftar's LNA. In fact, every factional leader in Libya depends on, and is sustained by foreign support. This is exemplified by the fact that the Government of National Unity (GNA) is supported by Western powers while the LNA derives its support from the United Arab Emirate (UAE) and Egypt and Misrata Brigade which is linked to the Misrata clan gains its support from Turkey and Qatar (Fitzgerald and Toaldo, 2016).

The present external support in the post-Gaddafi Libyan civil war can be traced back to the early period of crisis, when Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey started to initiate their individual roles after 2011. Also, some of the Western states (mostly NATO members) that intervened in Libya via the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) mission under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1973 have continued wield their influence as interested parties. Thus, following the post-NATO intervention, some of these external actors began to redefine their relationship with factional entities via material support either on ideological grounds or supporting opposing armed factions in response to local and regional developments. Therefore, these political and ideological cleavages have continued to reinforce competitive positions between various local factions and their external sponsors, which undermine diplomatic efforts orchestrated to usher in peaceful solution (Muhlberger, 2021). The major local actors rely on substantial external support to sustain their positions of relative strength on one hand, the foreign actors on their part, driven by a variety of interests, support local factions that suit their respective interests on the other hand. These issue of different ideological orientation among external players on ways to address the Libyan crisis is traceable to early 2011, when actors were divide between positions of non-intervention as expressed by Germany, Italy, the African Union, Turkey and, less explicitly, Russia and forceful intervention that was championed by France, the UK, the US, Qatar, the UAE, the UNSC and the Arab League. These divergent positions and shifting stance have revolved over time to the extent that actors like Italy have moved from its initial opposition stance to



intervention to playing active and forceful role in the military operations over Libya (Muhlberger, 2021).

4.2. The Political Economy of the External Interests in the post-Gaddafi Libyan Governance

The post-Gaddafi Libya governance heralded foreign interests due mainly to enormous economic resources coupled with a peculiar geographical location that links the country to other African and European countries. In addition, the change in political leadership created a space for the emergence of new parties; notable amongst them are the political Islam and the military movement creating a rift between the political leaderships in both eastern and western Libya in collaboration with interested foreign actors explained in the theory of local destabilization. In this section therefore, we shall discuss the political economic motives and interests of afore listed external parties in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance.

Egypt: Egypt is one of the primary actors in the Libyan conflict on account of their economic, security and ideological interests in the war-torn country.

1. **The Economic Motives:** The interest of Egypt could be explained by the fact that its economy was heavily affected aftermath of the Arab Spring by the following indicators:

a) The nexus between the Libyan civil war in 2011 and Egyptian Labour in Libya: The civil war in Libya that has tremendous effects on Egyptian labour in Libya, because about two million Egyptian migrant workers in Libya make over \$33 million annual financial remittances to Egypt (Mezran & Varvelli, 2017).

b) Libyan Investment in Egypt: Libya had made massive investments worth of billion dollars in various sectors of the Egyptian economy. Furthermore, as at 2013 the interim government in Libya injected about two billion dollars into Egyptian banks for the purpose of reviving the Egyptian economy (Mezran & Varvelli, 2017).

c) Egypt's Investment in Libyan Oil: Egypt owns colossal oil investments in Libyan oil resources which huge revenue returns for the former; hence Egypt sees a veritable choice in Libya an investment destination.

2. **Security Interests:** Security concerns also a major motivation of Egypt to intervene in Libya's civil war, particularly the issue of sharing a common border. This poses a security threat to Egypt, because there is likelihood that the eastern border could be turned into safe haven for incursion of extremist terrorist organizations into the country considering the fact that there are jihadist groups in both countries. There could be collusion between these extremists groups astride the border of the two countries leading to seamless communication and funding for them (Dentice, 2017). The above security fears is exemplified by the weapons and fighters that have been railroaded into Egypt from Libya in support of jihadist movement in Sinai (Dentice, 2017). Security concerns are reinforced by the threats Egypt



received concerning the Copts, which eventually resulted in the slitting of 21 Egyptian Copts by the Islamic State in 2015 (Heo, 2020).

3. Ideological Motive: Egypt played a prominent role in Libyan conflict by giving Khalifa Haftar a strong support. Egypt's was propelled by a desire to eliminate all forms of political Islam, hence the government under the aegis of Abdel Fateh el-Sisi supplied substantive money, weapons, and logistical support to Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA), because Egypt views the existence of political parties in the region as a threat to its national security. Way back in 2014 campaign to capture Benghazi, Khalifa Haftar has shown unwavering determination to completely eradicate these groups in Libya. These moves endeared him to Abdel Fateh el-Sisi who came to power through a military coup. In addition, Egypt supported Haftar under the guise of national security, laying claim that the warlord was committed to neutralize all forms of terrorism. Thus, Egypt's intelligence agencies increased their partnership with the Libyan National Army, joining Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to give a robust support to Haftar's campaign to overrun Tripoli (The National Interest Foundation, 2020).

The United Arab Emirate: The United Arab Emirate (UAE) shifting interventionism in Libya's civil conflict was born out three main motives: ideological, economic and diplomatic considerations.

1. Ideological Motive: The UAE is an external actor in Libyan civil conflict due to its stance against political Islam. Thus, the emergence of the Islamic movement led by the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya as in many other Arab nations since after the Arab Spring became a threat to the UAE (Haykel, 2013). In this wise the UAE joined forces with Egypt and Saudi Arabia to combat the Muslim Brotherhood and were sought to brand them as a terrorist organization (Diwan, 2017) as result the UAE supported Haftar in staging a coup against the Legislative Council in the West, which contained a majority of political Islam. This anti-political Islamism prompted the UAE to give General Haftar's Libyan Armed Forces (LAAF) overt and covert military support in 2014. For instance, the UAE leveraged Egypt as its proxy along the Egypt-Libya land border as well use of its soft power in Elysee to lend support to France in providing military and diplomatic support for Haftar. This efforts was gave a boost to Haftar's international standing as it helped him to take control of Eastern and Southern Libya inclusive of Libya's oil crescent via the equipment and aerial support from the UAE (Badi, 2022).

2. Economic: Economic consideration pushed UEA adjust its policy towards Libya when the United Nations-prodded political dialogue in 2021 resulted in the settlement for the Government of National Unity (GNU) coupled the UAE's endorsement of the Abraham Accords and its economic diplomacy vision of export-led foreign policy revolving around pragmatism, economic stability, and trade partnerships. This economic interest changed the UAE's foreign policy posture from forceful to soft approach, essentially due to Dbaiba's



transactional approaches which aligns with UAE's foreign policy shift. For instance, Dbaiba sought to revive the deals that Muammar Gaddafi had with the Emirates in the telecommunications, energy and construction sectors, including covert negotiations for Emirati companies to have access to, and operate in free-trade-zones, economic zones, and ports (Badi, 2022). Besides, UAE is attracted by Libya's enormous natural resources with a long stretch of coastline and many ports that serve as gateways to European continent, which the former needed to invest in (Dogan-Akkas, 2021).

3. Diplomatic and Geostrategic Considerations: First the urge to bolster its status in the region via reduction of conflicts of interest with other countries in the gulf region. For this, reason the UAE is bent on supporting Haftar, because it wanted to support a group that will be under its whims and caprices and sustaining its agenda [56] . In another development, the UAE changed its had stance against the hardline pro-Islamic regime of GNU, given its pursuit of rapprochement with Turkey. It follows that with United States pull-out from Afghanistan in 2021, the UAE was prompted to widen its alliances in an attempt to avoid dependence on the U.S. This moves demand focusing on regional diplomacy, and the UAE did everything possible not compromise its rapprochement with Turkey. In order to navigate between its ally, Haftar and the Turkish-backed Dbaiba, the UAE turned to brokering conciliatory meetings and shuttle diplomacy between Dbaiba and Haftar's circles, moved towards crafting a negotiated power-sharing arrangement between both. This compromise arrangement led to the replacement of Sanalla as National Oil Corporation (NOC) Chairman on the part of Dbaiba while Haftar lifted the hitherto blockade on oil ports. However, it is worth pointing out that the personal relationship between the new NOC Chairman, Bengdara and the UAE reveals that to a significant extent, the UAE's mediation mission is "rooted in self-interest and broader OPEC-related politicking" (Badi, 2022).

Turky: Turkey supports the internationally-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) as its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent troops and armed drones to Libya in January 2017, in view of its ideological, economic and strategic reasons.

1. Ideological Consideration: Turkey supports political Islam and democratization in Arab countries. This explains why Turkey was an overt supporter of the Arab Spring, the Libyan uprising as well as the democratically-elected Morsi government in Egypt in addition to its support for Qatar in the raging Gulf crisis (The National Interest Foundation, 2020). Therefore, Turkey's support for the Government of National Accord (GNA) is based on its ideological stance on the conflict.

2. Economic Consideration: The major motivation of Turkey's intervention in Libyan conflict is economic interest. This explains why the country is prone to support stability via the establishment of a central government. In the first instance, the fall of Gaddafi's regime and the ensuing civil war mortgaged Turkish interests. Thus, Turkey is seeking to safeguard its commercial interests having invested billions of dollars into Libya's construction sector as



Turkish firms signed about 304 commercial contracts (Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) (2020). For instance, Turkey's commercial interests are being owed roughly US\$19 billion in outstanding contractual obligations (Harchaoui, 2020). Most of these contractual obligations comprise unfinished and/or unpaid construction work and are considered very important to the seeming fragile state of the Turkish economy (Yuksel, 2021).

3. Strategic Interest: Ankara's support for the GNA features several drivers. First and foremost, Ankara seeks to expand its strategic depth in North Africa based on its view of Libya as 'essential near abroad', especially in the wake of the opportunity offered by the uprisings of 2011. Libya received special foreign policy attention as Turkish influence in Tunisia and Egypt dwindled in 2013 (Yuksel, 2021).

Turkey sees Libya as a leeway to securing its place in the 'great game' of eastern Mediterranean geo-economics between Egypt, Israel and Greece centred on gas exploration and maritime border delimitation. The major reason behind this particular driver was the exclusion of Turkey from various Mediterranean energy partnerships. These include the EastMed project (Israel, Cyprus and Greece) to install a gas pipeline over the sea floor via Crete rather than across Turkish soil and organizing collaboration through the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) (IGI Poseidon, 2021; Reuters, 2021). The age-long deep involvement of Greece in the eastern Mediterranean also contributed to reinforcing Turkish drive for intervention (Emre, 2020). On the whole, Turkey believes that Libya could be used to project Turkish influence in North Africa as well as projection of its power in the Mediterranean in order to re-assert its pipeline and territorial claims (Yukesel, 2021).

In view of above, Turkey signed a maritime agreement with the GNA in November 2017 which re-drew Libya's maritime borders and gave Turkey control of gas fields that was recently discovered in the Mediterranean. In strategic parlance, Turkey took this action in order to offset a similar agreement between Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Cyprus that would have cut Turkey off from drilling in the Mediterranean. The agreement to re-draw the Libyan maritime borders by the GNA was in exchange for Turkey's military support for Khalifa Haftar's offensive on Tripoli (National Interest, 2020). In addition, Turkey's interest in Libya is dictated by military agreement which entails that it provides military support for the maintenance of security and protection of the sovereignty of Libya, in an effort to strengthen the capabilities of the Government of National Accord in the West (Özşahin & Çakmak, 2022).

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia's involvement in Libya is also driven by ideological, security and economic goals.

1. Ideological Goals: The essence here is to prevent political Islamic government in Libya as represented by the GNA, the partial ally of the Muslim Brotherhood whose theological and



ideological beliefs are in direct opposition to the Madhkalis/Wahhabis strand of Islam which Saudi Arabia believes in. The Saudi Arabia subscribes to theocracy instead of democracy in Libya which incubates the idea of Pan-Islamism that it wants to spread across Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. Pan-Islamism is a philosophy in which Muslims are united in a single caliphate and adheres to Islamic principles (Elimer, 2021).

2. Security Consideration: The security interest of Saudi Arabia is to establish a buffer zone between the Middle East and North Africa. Having Libya as a buffer reduces any attack on Saudi Arabia (Elimer, 2021).

3. Economic Motive: The Saudi Arabia believes that prodding LNA into victory would yield enormous economic dividend to the country, particularly in crude oil production and post-war reconstruction. On this note, the victory for LNA would provide Saudi Arabia with ample post-war reconstruction contract opportunities as well as gain more oil production control for its own interest (Elimer, 2021).

The actions of other secondary actors such as Jordan, Russia and France betray their motives in the Libyan conflict. For instance, Jordan lends its support to Khalifa Haftar due to his self-professed ability to rid Libya of extremist groups after a meeting between Haftar and Jordan's King Abdullah II in 2015. While the Jordanian monarch agreed to support Haftar's campaign against terrorist organizations, Haftar in turn requested for support from Jordan via counterterrorism and other military training. Having obliged Haftar's Jordanian armed forces began to train armed militias fighting alongside the Libyan National Army. Besides military training, Jordan has been accused of violating arms embargoes to supply Khalifa Haftar's forces drones and transfer of arms to the Libyan National Army (The National Interest Foundation, 2020).

Russia and France are European powers with divers economic and political motives in the Libyan conflict. In the case of Russia, it is interested in Libyan oil and gas fields as well as broadening its sphere of influence in the Middle East and for purposes of supplanting the United States as a dominant foreign power in the region. This explains why Khalifa Haftar gave Russia access to Libyan oil fields and Libya's warm water ports on the Mediterranean in exchange for economic support, diplomatic cover at the United Nations, and military advice. Russia lends its military support through the Wagner Group, a paramilitary organization with ties to the Kremlin. Despite supporting Haftar, Russia has also made overtures to the Government of National Accord with the aim of becoming the dominant foreign peace-broker in the country. Pursuant to the above objective, Russia convened a summit between Haftar and GNA Prime Minister Fayeaz al-Serraj aimed at brokering a peace deal between the parties (The National Interest Foundation, 2020).

France has played a double standard role that has contributed in prolonging the Libyan conflict. Though it pays an open lip-service support for the internationally-recognized GNA,



France also subtly supported Khalifa Haftar as part of its ongoing anti-terrorism campaign in North Africa. Besides, France is reportedly linked with providing financial and military support to Haftar's forces. Thus, given the concerns over terrorism at home, French policymakers are driven to support the installation of an authoritarian regime as the best option to prevent radical groups from gaining footholds in North Africa. The above objective warranted France's support of Haftar's operation to capture the Fezzan region in Libya's southwest, with the view that the spate of lawlessness in the area has been favourable to the radical groups which it was making attempts to eradicate in the Sahel and across Africa (The National Interest Foundation, 2020).

Also, Fezzan harbours a large portion of Libya's oil and water resources, so by aiding Haftar's operation in Fezzan, France undermined the internationally-recognized government by providing its enemy with vital resources. Securing these vital resources helped in legitimizing Haftar in Libya's future political dialogue and further hurt the GNA's negotiating position. In addition, France provided Haftar with advisers, clandestine operatives, and Special Forces while taking responsibility for the weapons being used by Haftar's forces in violation of the U.N. arms embargo (The National Interest Foundation, 2020).

4.3 Contributions of External Interests in Exacerbating and Prolonging the Libyan War

The preceding section which justifies the two theories (theories of Local Destabilization and Competitive Interventions) earlier discussed had explained how the ideological, economic and strategic interests of external actors propelled them to support the local warring parties in Libya civil war. Therefore, the array of supports especially military support has contributed in exacerbating and prolonging the Libyan war in two major ways: strengthening the internal balance of power and spoiling the peace process. On account of military support, in spite of the international arms embargo, foreign interests still provided their preferred allies with military equipment. For instance, in eastern Libya, the Egyptian-Libyan border became transit route for cross-border movement of funds for financing Haftar's forces in the east. It was also through this channel that Haftar's forces received myriads of military equipment from the United Arab Emirate (UAE) (Harchaoui & Mohamed-Essaïd, 2019). Here, Egypt and UAE collaboration played major role in providing Haftar's forces with support in most of battles, especially the 2019 war against Tripoli which was the most prominent of all the battles. Besides providing military equipment, the UAE air base was established in the east (Zoubir, 2020) which provides an air cover in war periods. Thus, between 2014 and 2020, the UAE had provided about \$100 million worth of weapons support to Haftar (Bakir, 2020).

Beyond mere military support, the UAE carried out hundreds of drone strikes on behalf of Haftar, provided him with jet fuel and funded Sudanese mercenaries that fought on his behalf. The UAE was also a conduit for Russian paramilitary forces' positioned for military engagement in Tripoli's suburbs. Badi (2022) recorded that the US Department of Defense,



alleged that the UAE footed parts of the bill of Russian intervention in Libya by making payments to the Wagner Group, a sanctioned Russian mercenary group. These interventions were critical for Haftar to mobilize ground troops for his offensive.

On the flip side, Turkish forces played major role in sustaining the GNA. For instance, Turkish air support helped repel Haftar's attack on Tripoli, and subsequently, GNA forces with Turkish support captured several key towns from the Libyan National Army such as recovering the strategically vital al-Watiya airbase from Haftar's forces, and helping the GNA to continue to push eastward (The National Interest Foundation, 2020). By so doing Turkey's efforts was intended to restore the balance between the conflicting powers by supporting the Western forces. Turkey did not only provide military financing to the fighters of Operation Dawn of Libya (Winer, 2019), but it also to restore the balance of power between the parties through the military cooperation agreement (Seufert, 2020), which ended up reducing Haftar's military might. The military cooperation agreement significantly contributed to changing the balance of field forces, as it provided huge military equipment support to the Government of National Accord, in addition to its use of two warships as an air base through which it launches attacks in support of the Government of National Accord forces (International Crisis Group. (2020).

These external forces play divers roles that contribute in strengthening the capacities of the warring factions thereby prolonging the war. For instance, Wagner forces in the Libyan conflict provided logistics in terms of giving technical and tactical support to the fighters, drawing strategic plans for fighting as well as military intelligence. This role in particular contributes in no small measure for the survival of the forces and sustaining the war (Gorucu & Bunyad, 2020). In the case of Janjaweed forces comprising about 3,000 fighters, they were engaged by the UAE to strengthen the combat ranks of Haftar's forces, and by participating in many direct combat wars (Bakr, 2020) have contributed in sustaining and prolonging the war. Finally, the Turkish government deployed forces most of who are of Syrian origin based on the military cooperation agreement with the Government of National Accord (Kardaş, 2020). These forces have played part in strengthening the GNA's capacity to face its rival group thereby sustaining and prolonging the war in Libya.

There are two angles to spoiler game, the internal spoilers and the external spoilers. In the case of internal spoilers, the UAE and Egypt found it Haftar handy as a tool for internal spoiler game in peace processes. This spoiler game option played out in 2019 when all Libyan parties decided to meet in a comprehensive national dialogue. However, a few weeks prior to the commencement of the dialogue, Haftar declared a military operation against Tripoli (Varvelli & Lovotti, 2019), signifying Haftar's inclination to playing a spoiler of peace game. This explains why at the onset of the war on Tripoli, Haftar averred that the earlier signed Skhirat Agreement no longer subsist stating that his operation against Tripoli was based on the premise of liberating the state from terrorism (Cherkaoui, 2020). This use of terrorism thesis as a bait for military operations is an amplification of the position of Egypt,



the UAE and Saudi Arabia that political Islam are terrorist movements. As an external spoiler, the UAE repeatedly laid claims to be supportive of political negotiations in Libya while on the contrary present opposite policies of not respecting the negotiation process.

The UAE went further to try to influence the UN mediation that led the negotiations of the Skhirat Agreement (Oxford Analytica, 2015) to the extent that its envoy, Bernardino Leon, the lead negotiator, had links with UAE negotiating team and to whom he leaked information from the negotiations. In return, he was rewarded with a management position in one of the diplomatic colleges in the UAE (Watanabe, 2019). Thus, in spite of the agreement that was reached and signed by the negotiating parties, the trio of Egypt, UAE and Saudi Arabia still showed preference for the interim government emanating from the mandate of the House of Representatives in the east as against the internationally recognized GNA (International Crisis Group, 2016). On the whole, the external actors did not reflect their commitment to support peace in Libya having not honoured the agreement; rather, they were prone to achieving their individual interests, irrespective of the fact that this might lengthen the duration of the conflict.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The study examined the political economy of external interests in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance, signifying that the interest of the foreign actors in the Libyan conflict revolves around politics and economics, in other words, their participation in this conflict is embedded in their political and economic interests. In line with the specific objectives set for the study, the study sought to identify the various foreign actors in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance; explore the political economy of the external interests in the post-Gaddafi Libyan governance, and ascertain the extent to which these external interests have contributed in exacerbating and prolonging the Libyan war using the theories of Local Destabilization and Competitive Intervention.

The study is qualitative relying on secondary sources of data collection such as scholarly texts, journal articles, official websites, internet sources, media reports and reports of international organizations etc. It was identified that there were primary and secondary foreign actors in the Libyan post-Gaddafi conflict. Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey were identified as primary actors while the secondary actors in Libyan conflict include France, Italy, Jordan, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. It was affirmed that every factional leader in Libya depends on, and is sustained by foreign support. This is exemplified by the fact that the Government of National Unity (GNA) is supported by Western powers while the LNA derives its support from the United Arab Emirate (UAE) and Egypt and Misrata Brigade which is linked to the Misrata clan gains its support from Turkey and Qatar (Fitzgerald and Toaldo, 2016).



It was further revealed the support these external actors give to the local actors in the conflict are driven by the admixture of ideological, economic, geostrategic, diplomatic and security interests. More so, the activities of these foreign intervention have consternated in not only destabilizing Libya, but prolonging the war as their support for the local warring parties contribute in creating the climate of balance of power, thereby increasing their capacities to fight on without counting the cost since they received regular financial, weaponry, military support in terms of mercenary, training and logistics, amongst others. It was also found that another means the external actors contribute in prolonging the war is through the instrumentality of spoiler syndrome as they create both local spoilers who they prod to renege on armistice agreements, while they (the external actors) pose as external spoilers that frustrate every peaceful move to resolve the conflict in order to serve their respective national political and economic interests.

Ultimately, in tandem with the theories of Local Destabilization which provides the analytical footing for understanding the motives of the various international parties and Competitive Intervention that provides understanding of how the competition amongst the foreign actors influences the extended duration the conflict and instability; the study reinforces the perception that intervening international parties, via their interests in Libya, keep on sustaining the state of Libyan domestic instability, by means of military support or spoiling the peace syndrome.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this manuscript.

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