

Turkey's National Interest in The Civil War in Libya for The Period 2019-2020

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Abstract

The Civil War that took place in Libya in 2011, where the uprising carried out by the Libyan people against the regime of Muammar Khadaffi and triggered by a series of events in the Middle East or better known as the "Jasmine Revolution" (The act of overthrowing the ruling rulers who were considered too authoritarian; Jasmine as a symbol of chastity has a fragrant aroma. The fallen demonstrators are considered sacred, whose blood is fragrant, supposed to be jasmine). During the conflict, there were several countries involved in the Libyan civil war, one of which was Turkey, which carried out its national interests there. The purpose of this study is to analyze why Turkey became involved in the civil war in Libya after the Muammar Khadaffi era. This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods that are implemented with theories in the study of International Relations. Qualitative research has the benefit of gaining an understanding of the opinions, reasons and motivations underlying an event which in this study is in the form of Turkey's National Interest in the Civil War in Libya. The result of this research is that Turkey wants to realize its national interests, especially in terms of economic interests. Turkey's national interests in terms of economy include: wanting to control the oil and gas resources found in the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey wants to conduct gas exploration along the Turkish and Libyan border in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean. The 200-mile sea border will be Turkey's gas exploration ground. In addition, there are business interests where Turkey exports goods worth US\$ 2 billion annually. As a result of the ongoing conflict in Libya, it suffered losses of US \$19 Billion.

Keywords

national interest; civil war;
libyan conflict



I. Introduction

War is a real, deliberate and widespread armed conflict that takes place between two or more political communities that are hostile to each other. One type of conflict or war is civil or civil war within a country. Several civil wars in the Middle East and Africa region were intervened by foreign parties, one of which was the Civil War, which occurred in Libya. This was triggered by an event in the Middle East called the "Jasmine Revolution" (The act of overthrowing a ruling ruler who was considered too authoritarian in which the fallen demonstrators were considered sacred and fragrant like jasmine). this event then resulted in an uprising in Libya carried out against the regime of Muammar Khadaffi. The fate of the Libyan state is tragic because of the impact of the rebels (Furness & Trautner, 2020).

This conflict is a domino effect produced by the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring is a phenomenon of the outbreak of democratic revolutions in the Arab world. This event was started by Tunisia around the middle of 2010, then encroached into other countries, such as

Egypt, and Shia. Unlike what happened in Egypt and Tunisia, Khadafi actively responded the pressure from the opposition camp. Khadafi used brutal ways by using his military might and rallying support from his loyal followers to maintain his position as ruler in Libya (Kwon & Hemsley, 2017). Organization must have a goal to be achieved by the organizational members (Niati et al., 2021). The success of leadership is partly determined by the ability of leaders to develop their organizational culture. (Arif, 2019).

So, this caused quite a lot of victims from civilians who fought for freedom and democratic government. This conflict that occurred in Libya was originally an internal conflict. However, over time, this conflict expanded into an international issue. Because of the increasing severity of the conflict and the number of victims, it caused foreign parties to enter, one of which was France. France responded strongly to the disagreement of the military action by Libyan leader Moammar Khadafi by the rebels. This is evidenced by France being the first state to recognize rebel authority as a representative of the Libyan people in the eastern city of Benghazi and is the state that leads in the course of military intervention (Fajarini & Anam, 2022). But NATO's decision to intervene in Libya received a negative response from Turkey. President Erdogan rejects any form of intervention from outside countries and views that the Libyan people have the right to determine their country's political system (Vinken, 2018).

From 2012 to 2015 three political camps were formed in Libya. the first political camp, the GNC or General National Congress, was a temporary legislature formed in 2012. The establishment of the GNC aims to replace the role of the Libyan National Transitional Council in assisting the transition of the Libyan political system (Korotayev, Issaev, & Shishkina, 2021). Furthermore, the second political camp is the LNA or Libyan National Army. The LNA is a political group led by a former Military General in the Gaddafi era, General Khalifa Haftar, this group contains Libyan national military forces, this political group began to emerge in 2015. The third political camp is the GNA or General National Accord which was formed under the foundation of the United Nations in 2016 (Elzahaf, Johnson, & Tashani, 2016). The three camps are the main actors in Libya's political dispute. Where the three camps have their own fiefdoms, the GNC is based in Tripoli, the LNA in Tobruk and the GNA in Tripoli (Murdani & Machmudi, 2021)

In 2016, the feuding side in the Libyan conflict experience a change, this was marked by the retreat of the GNC political camp from the conflict. Sari ARRAF, "THE WAR REPORT 2017, LIBYA: A SHORT GUIDE ON THE CONFLICT." Geneva Academy, Geneva (2017).ARRAF, "THE WAR REPORT 2017, LIBYA: A SHORT GUIDE ON THE CONFLICT," Geneva Academy, Geneva (2017). The dissolution of the GNC made the two remaining camps the main actors in Libya's political conflict nowadays, in contrast to Turkey's response in 2011, where Turkey chose not to take part in the Libyan conflict and denounced outside interventions such as NATO conducting military operations in Libya at the time. (Málnásky, 2020) Meanwhile, at the end of 2019, Turkey decided to get involved in the Libyan conflict.

Turkey's action to get involved in the conflict is not as an intermediary or neutral party but rather involved as a supporter of one of the camps that are actors in conflict, which is the GNA (Bădulescu, 2021). Turkey's involvement in the Libyan conflict is the result of a decision by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has the full support of the Turkish government's parliament. Turkey's form of intervention in the Libyan conflict is in the form of military intervention. Turkey's intervention was in the form of a military where in 2019, Turkey sent technological weapons assistance in the form of destructive drones (TB2) to the GNA and taught the GNA military forces how to use the drones (Agamaliev & Gur'yanova, 2021) Then, in early 2020 Turkey's military

intervention was evident when Turkey decided to send armed forces to Tripoli to attack Haftar's forces. According to a report reported by the United States Department of Resilience, the Pentagon, it was noted that the number of troops amounted to 3,500 paid military forces of Syrian origin sent by Turkey to Tripoli. From these actions it can be seen that Turkey's approach in the Libyan conflict can be said to be a slightly aggressive approach and is clearly an act of intervention (Abdulrahman Al-Fawwaz, 2021).

Nevertheless, Turkey remains adamant about taking a role in the Libyan conflict. Turkey's decision received a negative response from other countries, especially African and Middle Eastern states such as Egypt. Egypt opposes any military intervention by Turkey in Libya because it could threaten security stability in the Mediterranean region (Tziarras, 2022).

Foreign intervention in a civil war conflict is nothing new. If there is an outside country that decides to get involved in it, of course, that country has a plan called the national interest. Usually, intervention in a civil war in a country in some regions of the Middle East and Africa is carried out by superpowers such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia.

As known, Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is quite active in international issues. Turkey is geographically located between the Asian Continent and the African Continent and also Turkey is 3 surrounded by several regions or regions that are in conflict. The Iraqi and Syrian territories directly adjacent to Turkey are also in a civil war conflict. Syria is still in conflict between President Bashar al-Assad's government against the opposition, while Iraq is still fighting the ISIS group (Ozkececi-Taner, 2017).

Turkey and Libya in its history were indeed a part when Libya became the territory of the Ottoman Turkish caliphate for more than 300 years, namely in the period 1551-1912. After that, Libyan and Turkish relations experienced ups and downs, especially Libya during the Muammar Khaddafi era and Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdogan. When there was a political crisis in Libya that was started by the Arab Spring movement, Turkey, which is also a NATO member in favor of Muammar Khaddafi, was couped by the opposition. After the Muammar Khaddafi era, NATO members split in support of one of the groups in conflict in Libya. Turkey supports the GNA, while some other NATO members support the military group led by General Khalifa Haftar (Ozkececi-Taner, 2017).

From the above discussion, it can be found that there is a discrepancy in turkey's change of attitude in responding to the events that occurred in Libya, where at first Turkey gave a negative response to the actions of other countries to be involved in the Libyan crisis in 2011. However, a few years later Turkey suddenly decided to get involved in the crisis.

Based on the background that has been presented above, the formulation of the problem that arises is How is Turkey's national interest in the Civil War in Libya in 2019-2020?

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Civil War

Carl von Clausewith, a war philosopher from Germany, in his book "On War" defines war as "an act of violence intended to fulfill our opponents" (War is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will). "War is like a duel but on a broad scale" (War is like a duel, but on an extensive scale). It is also said by Clausewith

that war is not something that stands alone. "War is a continuation of politics in other ways"(Gurses, 2018)

In short, war is a real, deliberate and widespread armed conflict that occurs between two or more political communities that are hostile to each other. Fistfights among people of an individual nature cannot be said to be wars, including fights between inter-forces or feuds between citizens from a certain area and residents from other regions. War is a symptom that occurs among the political community defined as an entity that can be a state or that intends to be a state. A classic war is an international war, which is a war involving different countries, such as World Wars I and II (Gurses, 2018).

Meanwhile, civil war or civil war is a war that occurs within a country that involves groups or communities that are hostile to each other. Certain pressure groups, such as terrorist organizations, can be considered political communities because they are also a group of people who have a specific political purpose. Many of these groups have inspired or dreamed of the founding of a country or influenced the development of the country in a particular region (Parish, 2020).

A group of combatants and supporters is called the army, navy, and air force. Wars can be carried out simultaneously in several different terrains. In each of the terrain there can be one or more consecutive military campaigns. One military campaign included not only fighting but also intelligence, troop movements, supplies of food and weapons needs, propaganda, and others. Successive conflicts are called combat, although this term cannot always be applied to conflicts involving fighters, guided missiles or bombs themselves, without the presence of ground forces or navy. Civil war is the use of force to solve domestic problems (Parish, 2020).

There are two kinds of causes of war, namely direct causes or *casus belli* and general causes. For direct is merely an event that encourages one side to feel legitimate and just to start a war over another. This direct cause would not have arisen had there been no common causes preceding it. The causes of war can be various, namely psychological causes, cultural and ideological causes, economic causes and political causes (Smith, 2018).

2.2 National Interest

The national interest—or in the French expression *raison d'État*—is the goal and ambition of the state, whether economic, military, or cultural. According to the mainstream stream in the Study of International Relations, this concept is important as the basis for the state in conducting international relations. Machiaveli's arguments regarding national interests are widely referred to in practice as well as theoretical development, as 4 justifications for the international behavior of states that ignore the main interests of earlier antiquity, namely religion and morality (Dimitrov, Palangurski, Hristova, Hristova, & Bouzov, 2019). The state is descended from the divine order and is subject to its own special needs, namely the national interest. National interests are closely related to state power as a goal and instrument, especially those that are destructive (hard power). When the national interest aims to pursue power and power is used as an instrument to achieve the national interest, then its consequences in the international system that anarchy perceives—except for its own power—are competition, the emergence of a balance of power, conflict and war. (Smith, 2018)

In the study of International Relations, national interest is a goal and ambition of the state in various aspects including those covering the economic, military, and cultural fields. The national interest is quite closely related to the actualization of the power or power that a country has to achieve its goals. In classical meaning, the use of power in the context of

achieving national interests generally correlates with destructive policy orientations (Khawaja & Mahmood, 2020). However, over time, the use of destructive power or referred to as hard power, began to be replaced by national interests that are cooperative and persuasive or also known as soft power. In its implementation, the realization of a national interest must also be accompanied by appropriate techniques and diplomacy methods. Traditionally diplomacy has the meaning of an art of negotiating with other countries. But with the development of the times experts believe that diplomacy has undergone a change in nature. This concept has included both the management of relations between countries in the traditional sense, as well as with other non-state actors.

The concept of national interest has an indication that the state plays the role of the main actor in the formulation of an independent sovereign politics. Furthermore, in the mechanism of interaction, each state or actor seeks to pursue its national interests. It is this interest that is finally formulated into the concept of 'power' the interest of 'interest' is defined into the realm of the terminology of power (Sitepu, 2011: 56).

National interests are created from the needs of a country. This importance can be seen from its internal conditions, both from political-economic, military, and socio-cultural conditions. Interests are also based on a power to be created so that the state can have a direct impact on the consideration of the country in order to gain world recognition. The role of a state in providing materials as the basis of national interests will inevitably become the spectacle of the international community as a country that establishes the inherent relations of its foreign policy. This study discusses the national interest of the Turkish state in the Civil War in Libya in 2019-2020 (Matthew, 2020).

III. Research Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods implemented with theories in the study of International Relations. Qualitative research has the benefit of gaining an understanding of the opinions, reasons and motivations underlying an event in which in this research is in the form of Turkey's National Importance in the Civil War in Libya (Yannis & Nikolaos, 2018). While the method that will be used by the researcher is the case study method, it is because the researcher wants to know more about turkey's national interest in Libya. So aside from what had been stated, the researcher also wants to capture the implied meaning of this case. The data collection technique in this article uses documentation techniques where the author reads works related to the theme raised. Other sources in the form of articles, news, videos are also supporting sources in this article (Gallegas, 2018).

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Turkey's National Interest in Its Involvement in the Libyan War

Since the fall of the authoritarian regime in Tunisia as well as Egypt, Libya has also participated in bringing down the authoritarian regime that has been in power in its country for more than 40 years, the Gaddafi regime. The Libyan uprising is said to be a unique uprising even in Arab Spring terms. The thing that makes the uprising in Libya unique is that first, no one thought that Muammar Gaddafi, who had been in power for 42 years, could be challenged. Secondly, it was the first in a series of Arab Springs in which a dictator resisted who challenged him. Third, Libya is the only country to get intervention from external militaries, and the first case in which the Arab League appears to be an actor

seen as supporting such outside intervention. Fourth, the uprising caused that full-scale civil war to end in the cruel death of Gaddafi (Tocci, 2020).

After the collapse of the regime from Gaddafi in Libya, the country had difficulty being able to unite. The reason is that when all components of the state, united to resist the Gaddafi regime, it became the impetus for armed groups to proliferate, and Islamism emerged as a powerful new political force. In Libya's first democratic elections, most voters voted for secular rule. But the transition was marred by competition among secular, Islamist and independent party parties coupled with increasing clashes among new militias (Kardaş, 2020).

In 2014, parliament was plagued by political jams. Voter turnout dropped to just 18 percent in the 2014 election from nearly 62 percent in the 2012 election. Of the many new powers emerging in Libya and carrying their own agendas, the biggest rivalry in Libya's second conflict is between Fayeze al-Sarraj who leads the GNA against Khalifa Haftar who leads the LNA where they both fight for seats of government in Libya. Fayeze al-Sarraj himself is someone appointed by the United Nations to become the new government after the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya and currently controls the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Meanwhile, Khalifa Haftar is the military chief in the Gaddafi regime who experienced exile in the United States for two decades and then returned to Libya in 2011. In 2014 he launched a mission called Operation Dignity whose goal was to purge Islamists in Libya and since then his power has increased even more until he took control of the Tobruk region (Altunışık, 2020).

It was this power struggle that took place between al-Sarraj and Haftar that eventually invited foreign powers to be present in the Libyan conflict (Shay, 2019). These foreign powers include Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Russia, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Chad, Jordan and Qatar. Where these forces are divided into two camps, namely al-Sarraj's camp and Haftar's camp. Unlike other countries that support its camp indirectly, Turkey actually supports al-Sarraj in a clear and significant way such as providing more finances, military hardware, diplomatic support and even eventually conducting military intervention in Libya.

Turkey's re-presence in Libya after the collapse of the Gaddafi regime was in 2014 where Turkey entered into economic cooperation with Libya. In that economic cooperation, however, Turkey has clearly stated that it will support the legitimate government in Libya (al-Sarraj). Since then, Turkey's role has increased in providing its support to the legitimate government in Libya which began with sending mercenaries and weapons in support of the GNA to fight the LNA. Thus, Turkey in early 2020 issued a policy to intervene militarily in Libya. The Turkish military's entry in Libya in support of the GNA against the LNA has had a significant impact on the conflict. This is because the GNA experienced back-to-back victories and managed to repel the LNA forces. Seeing this, Turkey was later called the most dominating external actor in the current Libyan conflict. Turkey's action to issue this policy of military intervention drew condemnation from various countries, but Turkey remained on its stand and Erdogan stated that its presence in Libya was to ensure that Libya could get peace and have stable conditions again. In addition, Erdogan also stated that Ankara will continue to frustrate fans of local and foreign coups and lovers of terrorist organizations (Málnásky, 2020).

Turkey, pro against the Muslim Brotherhood. Libya, a long time ago was part of the Ottoman Caliphate, the predecessor of the modern Turkish Republic. Erdogan's support characterizes his Pan-Islamism policies (Cheema-Fox, LaPerla, Serafeim, & Wang, 2020). Including military support for government in Tripoli. This, refers to Turkey's maritime dominance during the Ottoman era in the Eastern Mediterranean and Aegean Seas. For

Turkey itself, Libya is a country that is one of its references in carrying out economic cooperation. Before the revolution in February 2011, Turkey's interests in Libya focused on strengthening its economic interests and investors from Turkey pumped billions of dollars into the sector, Turkish business companies signed about 304 commercial contracts in Libya (Petriaiev, 2021). In propping up economic interests in Libya, Turkey opposes NATO's military intervention to bring down the Khadafi regime. After Khadafi was killed, Turkey changed course of its position by supporting the Libyan revolution and supporting the Government of National Accord (GNA).

There are three stages that Turkey has undertaken in its intervention into Libya (Kardaş, 2020):

1. In 2014, Turkey sought to restore economic relations with Libya by supporting stability and a stable central government. The fall of the Khadafi Regime and all the chaos of Libya resulting from the civil war were very detrimental to Turkish interests. The transformation in Libya is precisely at the root of the regional conflict. Turkey often hosts several media institutions and political figures opposed to Haftar's 6 projects on its territory.
2. Turkey backed a Libyan political agreement signed in The UN-led Skhirat, in December 2015. Turkey's military role is in supporting the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, especially after Haftar's attack on the capital in April 2019. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan conferred with the Government of National Accord (GNA) Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, stating that Ankara was ready to provide all sorts of aid and all resistance efforts he called "conspiracy against the Libyan people"
3. On November 27, 2019, the Turkish Government under Erdogan's leadership together with the Government of National Accord (GNA). signed a memorandum of understanding on sovereignty over sea areas in the Mediterranean Sea

According to the author, based on the explanation of the stages carried out by Turkey involved in Libya, there is Turkey's national interest in the Civil War in Libya in 2019-2020, especially interests in the economic field. It is clear that Turkey wants to take advantage of the resources in the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey therefore entered into a treaty over the Mediterranean Sea region. The Mediterranean Sea has very abundant resources, especially oil and gas. In addition, there are other interests carried out by Turkey, namely business interests and exporting goods worth US\$ 2 billion annually. As a result of the ongoing conflict in Libya, it suffered losses of US \$19 Billion. Currently, Turkey continues to oversee construction for the future in Libya. Erdogan is trying to use the bilateral agreement between Libya and Turkey as an enhancer of Turkey's footprint and policy in the region towards its rivals, namely Egypt. Supporting the Government of National Accord (GNA) is one of Turkey's many efforts to continue to engage in the future with Libya. Turkey may have some strategy of profit by aligning its interests to the oil-rich North African country. But it's kind of a gamble, if Haftar Wins, Turkey Loses.

Senior analyst at Rystad Energy, Aditya Saraswat said it was in Turkey's interest to conduct gas exploration along the maritime borders of Turkey and Libya in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean. The 200-mile sea border will be Turkey's gas exploration ground. Libya's and Turkey's deal on gas exploration has been denounced by its neighbors. Cyprus said the new exclusive economic zone that Turkey and Libya agreed upon had broken through Cyprus' international borders. Libya is the country that owns the largest oil reserves in Africa with an estimated 48.4 billion barrels or the eighth largest in the world. Libyan economic analyst and former director of Malita Oil Company, Mahmoud Al Aun said the Government of National Accord was no longer able to reject Turkey's offer because of the political and military support provided. Turkey wants to get the

biggest market from reconstruction projects and trade deals and to share the management of oil wells. Organ Oytun of the Center for Middle East Strategic Studies said that greed for oil and gas was one of the determining factors for Ankara to interfere in Libya. It should also be remembered that many Turkish companies that have been doing business in Libya during Ghaddafi's time flowed billions of US dollars to Turkey. The civil war left Libya's economy devastated. Turkey wants to build its business back from Libya.

V. Conclusion

After conducting analysis and discussion, the author can conclude that Turkey's involvement in the civil war that occurred in Libya in 2019-2020 began with the power struggle that occurred between al-Sarraj and Haftar which eventually invited foreign powers to attend the Libyan conflict. These foreign powers include Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Russia, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Chad, Jordan and Qatar. Where these forces are divided into two camps, namely the Al Sarraj camp and the Haftar camp. Turkey at the time actually supported al-Sarraj in a blatant and significant manner such as providing more finances, military hardware, diplomatic support and even eventually conducting military intervention in Libya. Behind this, it was revealed that Turkey wants to realize its national interests, especially in terms of economic interests. Turkey's national interests in terms of economy include: wanting to control the oil and gas resources found in the Mediterranean Sea. Turkey wants to conduct gas exploration along the Turkish and Libyan border in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean. The 200-mile sea border will be Turkey's gas exploration ground. In addition, there are business interests where Turkey exports US \$2 billion worth of goods annually. As a result of the ongoing conflict in Libya, it suffered losses of US \$19 Billion.

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