

**"The Iraqi-Libyan species of intervention, with UN 'approval' but under the West's watch, is a post Cold-War phenomenon."**

General Khalifa Haftar, head of the Libyan National Army, is advancing on the capital Tripoli, having taken control of the east of the country including most of the oilfields. Gen. Haftar had helped Muammar Qaddafi seize power in 1969 before going into exile in the U.S. in the 1980s, but returned to Libya in 2011 to join in Qaddafi's overthrow. He now casts himself as a conservative Salafist opposing Islamists and the Muslim Brothers, and has the backing — for their individual reasons — of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and some West Asian states, apart from Russia (openly) and France (covertly).

### Libya's descent

The United Nations recognised Tripoli's administration is called the Government of National Accord, but is anything but that, being dependent on a motley of warlords, militant or moderate Islamists, secessionists and monarchists, all split on regional and ethnic lines. Even before Gen. Haftar launched his offensive, West Libya was replete with inter-militia battles and kidnappings. The Tripoli government commands no security forces, public administration scarcely exists, water, petrol and power shortages abound, and few banks operate. Thousands are fleeing towards Tunisia, and 180 people have been killed so far in the recent fighting.

The rule of the gun prevails in Libya ever since western forces overthrew Qaddafi. The oil-rich country, now a departure point for thousands of migrants travelling to Europe, once had one of Africa's highest standards of living, free health care and education, with high female literacy and percentage of women in the workplace. Its inland waterway to green the eastern desert was called the world's largest irrigation project. But after the western armed intervention supported by some Arab sheikhdoms, a perceptive commentator noted, "Nothing was certain, least of all what kind of country Libya would now become."



The revolt against Qaddafi began in Benghazi, and western intervention was legitimised by the fig leaf of a UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire, a no-fly zone and protection of civilians, on which there were five abstentions which included India, Russia and China. Qaddafi accepted the resolution. Shortly thereafter, France, the U.K. and the U.S. attacked Qaddafi's forces and NATO assumed responsibility for regime change at the same moment that an African Union mediation mission was en route to Libya.

The Libyan tragedy, like those in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and most probably to ensue in Afghanistan, il-

illustrates wider issues at play. Iraqi warring militias after the Second Gulf War empowered jihadists, made Iraq ungovernable, U.S. withdrawal inevitable, and led to the Balkanisation of the nation. No lessons were learned, causing former U.S. President Barack Obama to confess that his worst mistake was a failure to prepare for the aftermath of western intervention following Qaddafi's overthrow. Western wishful thinking persists in the belief that Libya could arrive at a path to democracy that revives the country's collapsed institutions, rather than falling under military rule.

### **Post Cold-War phenomenon**

In 1965 and 1981, the UN adopted declarations on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of states, and until the 1990s the UN was the custodian of state sovereignty. The Iraqi-Libyan species of intervention, professedly with UN approval but actually under western control, is a post Cold-War phenomenon, the motivation being to implant liberal democratic institutions and human rights, along with security concerns, usually thinly justified by 9/11 and lately the Islamic State. Exogenous state-building and a peripheral role for local leaders characterise this innovation in international relations. The spectre of failed states became a major concern, leading to the imposition of a neo-liberal agenda in the guise of human rights protection.

The ambiguous legal justification for interventions not specifically authorised by the UN, such as the creation of safe havens in Iraq, established a pattern despite negative precedents that showed that attempting nation-building in societies divided by ethnic, factional, ideological and religious lines is beyond the capacity of any minority group of UN members, let alone of one super-power. None of the interventions could have taken place without the projection of U.S. power or its indirect underwriting.

Two factors paved the way for these neo-protectorates; activists with rights-based agendas joined the political mainstream, and western outrage to televised suffering. Activists united with foreign policy establishments, and third world disorder presented opportunities for sly expansion of mandates into new operating areas. Added to these was post-1990 revisionism towards state sovereignty and permissiveness to humanitarian interventions. Relativism towards sovereignty was anathema to post-colonial independent states, especially when western interventions were selective and political in nature, and the victims of intervention lacked the power to oppose.

Western nations came to contemplate, albeit fitfully and inconsistently, neutralising a number of sovereign states in the third world that were illiberal, war-torn or internally weak, as potential threats to international peace. But this essentially political project was presented as a high-minded enterprise with altruistic motivations, similar to the post-war occupations of Germany and Japan.

There were many reasons for the failure of state-building in the new protectorates. The new elites were never very different or more liberal than those deposed. Organised criminality was invigorated by opportunities created by the absence of proper law enforcement due to outsiders not understanding the consequences of their policies. This was because the interveners were more concerned with checking the power of institutions rather than building them, and to appease domestic opinion back home, concentrated on exit strategies and political markers such as holding elections. If the outcome was doubtful even in Kosovo in Europe, the challenge of transforming political and social cultures in the world beyond Europe, where there is no economic pull factor and traditions have little in common with western liberalism, was obviously far more formidable.

As for humanitarian arguments and the Responsibility to Protect doctrine, such reasoning is malleable enough to be appropriated by Russia in Georgia and Ukraine. Whether in Libya or elsewhere, expeditionary interventions to implant human rights and democracy have a certain heuristic value in understanding the illusions of western hegemony which rose to prominence in our times and sought to mould the third world in its image.

## Current status of Libya

### Why in the discussion?

- The atmosphere of conflict continues in Libya and in order to deal with the situation, the UN Security Council has started afresh on the draft demand for a ceasefire in Tripoli on which there is division between the global forces.
- Germany, who chaired the Council, demanded an immediate meeting after the conflict in Tripoli was increased.
- In Libya the rebel commander Iftaar had launched aggressive action to take control of the capital Tripoli two weeks earlier.

### main point

- Tripoli is currently under the control of the UN-backed government.
- The Khalifa Haftar Arrest is a supporter of the rebel administration in East Libya and he refuses to recognize Tripoli's government.
- India has recalled the 15 CRPF troopers involved in the peacekeeping force, due to the sudden deteriorating situation in African country Libya.
- The Indian Embassy in Tunisia took the initiative for this. Significantly, Libya is also in charge of the Indian Embassy located in Tunisia.
- It is worth mentioning after the meeting between Libya's armed rebel leader General Khalifa Haftar United Nations General Secretary Antonio Guterres was undecided they and the marched to Tripoli.
- Libya's global recognized government is currently working in Tripoli.

### About Libya

- Libya is a country rich in desert and oil in North Africa.
- Libya gained independence in 1951. After that the oil was discovered and there was immense wealth in the country.
- Colonel Gaddafi captured power in 1969 and ruled for four decades, until he was not removed

after an armed revolt assisted by Western military intervention in 2011.

- **Capital:** Tripoli
- **Population:** 6.4 million
- **Area:** 1.77 million sq km (685,524 square miles)
- **Main Language:** Arabic
- **Main religion:** Islam
- **Currency:** Libya Dinar

### Geography of Libya

- Libya is a country of the Magrib region of North Africa. It is the fourth largest country in Africa, whose majority of the population lives in the coastal region of the Mediterranean
- 90% of the country is covered with desert which is a part of Sahara Desert. Here lives are only found in and around the scattered oasis. Spanning 685,524 square miles, being a country of North Africa, on the banks of the Mediterranean Sea, Libya, was a country with special significance in history.
- Tunisia in the northwest of Libya, Algeria in the west, Niger and Chad in the south, Sudan in the south east, and east Egypt have boundaries.
- The northern Mediterranean link connects Libya with Europe and the rest of the world. The plateau is scattered in south and west. Tripoli is one of the two ports in the country, where the country's sixth population lives.
- It is located in the west of the Mediterranean Sea. The other is located in the east of Benghazi, the second port.

### After World War II

- Libya was an independent monarchy after independence in 1951. After the military coup in 1969, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi ruled the country since 1969 and ruled for four decades.
- Col. Gaddafi militarised Libya. Gen. Gaddafi and America had a lot of hostility, which started to end in the 21st century.
- In 2011, rebel insurgency with Western military support ended his rule and they were killed.

**Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)**

**1. Consider the following statements-**

1. Libya is the second largest country of Africa continent, with most of its population living in the coastal area of the Mediterranean.
2. The boundary of Libya does not touch to be from Chad and Sudan.
3. Benghazi is the main port of Libya situated east of the Mediterranean Sea.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) Only 2
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) All of the above

**Expected Questions (Mains Exams)**

- Q. Considering the recent growing tensions in Libya, which type of strategy should the United Nations adopt at global to improve the situation. (250Words)**

**Note:** Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 18 APR. is 1(c) 2 (c)