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TURKISH INVOLVEMENT IN LIBYA, FOCUSING ON THE SECOND LIBYAN CIVIL WAR

Abstract: *Libya and Turkey has a long history together, so the modern age partnership, common investments, trades are not a surprise. Although it was still shocking for some that Turkey intervened in the Second Libyan Civil War. Turkey was not the only foreign actor but still outside of the circle of the “big players”, the so-called world powers, although it proved to be a game changer of the conflict. No experts questioning that now that Turkey’s intervention had a major influence on the outcome of the conflict. Turkey supported the UN-recognized government of Libya and provided weapons, human resources, know-how for the GNA, and on the other side tried to make business, political deals favorable for Ankara. The main question how did Turkey intervene in Libya and why was it important for Ankara to step into this conflict?*

Keywords: *Turkey-Libya connections, Libyan Civil War, Khalifa Haftar, Sarraj, GNA, LNA, Erdogan, Turkish military*

Introduction

Turkey is striving to become a more and more significant power on the map, especially in the Mediterranean. The current government's ambitions are fed not only by the current political games, but also by historical, ideological, and religious reasons. Historically, much of the Mediterranean was part of the Ottoman Empire. Other parts are

also considered the "blue homeland" of Turkey, meaning Turkey considers the surrounding sea basins its home. (Yayci, 2022). Furthermore, some territories were and still are part of the Islamic culture, in which Turkey is trying to play a larger role. Libya tops the list in all three aspects. This makes it easier to understand why Turkey has not only used "soft power" to strengthen its influence in Libya, but has also used "hard power," specifically military power, to ensure that Libya moves in a way that is also appropriate for Turkey. I would like to study the connection between Turkey and Libya and how Turkey became increasingly involved in Libya's second civil war. I studied the most recent studies, books, and news articles to find answers.

To understand Libya's current situation

Libya was a dictatorship under Muammar Gaddafi, but the Arab Spring has not brought prosperity to the country either. Fighting is always in the atmosphere and, unfortunately, sometimes reaches the ground, too. There was a civil war after Gaddafi in 2011, and another from 2014. There was a legal government led by Fayeza Mustafa al-Sarraj, called the Government of National Accord (GNA) from 2015 December, with an official army, which was attacked by a military leader called Khalifa Haftar, who was before commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA), which was a component of Libya's military forces, but he used his position to unite the soldiers under him and collected other supporters and created an opposition force against the Sarraj government.

Haftar launched Operation Dignity and attacked the GNA forces with his troops forming another Libyan army against the GNA. The Sarraj government and the GNA were recognized by the UN, but Haftar and the LNA were supported by the UAE and Russia, which made the situation quite difficult. Turkey soon became an important actor in the conflict emphasizing its support of the official government from the beginning. This started with negotiations and agreements, and continued with military exports, training and sending Turkish troops to Libya. Later in my study I will try to list the areas where Turkey intervened in the Second Libyan Civil War.

Turkey-Libya relations in general

As a preface to Turkish-Libyan relations we can state: Turkey has deep historical roots in Libya, since the country was part of the Ottoman Empire (Özkan, 2011) from 1552

until 1911, where Libya served in an important role for the sultan to impose sovereignty on the coasts of the Mediterranean and Africa. (Elmaloul, 2021)

In the modern history, Turkey has active connections with Libya since the Gaddafi era (1969-2011). Erdogan enjoyed good relations with the leader of the country until the outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011 when the Turkish president began to distance himself from the north African dictator. (Collins, 2020) When the NATO planned to start a military intervention in Libya against Colonel Gaddafi's regime Turkey first opposed it, but Ankara soon changed its position and supported the Libyan revolution. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

The SADAT International Defence Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc., a Turkish institute allegedly close to the government, has been present in Libya for more than a decade. Turkey was the first country to appoint Ambassador in Tripoli in September 2011 after the revolution. This embassy must be resumed in 2014 because of the heavy conflicts but from 2017 it continued to operate. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Türkiye, n.d.)

According to the article of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey also participated in NATO's "Operations Unified Protector" (OUP), which was launched to protect Libyan civilians and civilian populated areas after the crisis of the Gaddafi government. The operation was between March 23 and October 31, 2011. „Turkey contributed to the OUP with frigates, a submarine, two tanker aircrafts and four F-16s fighters, in non-combat roles. The operation was successfully concluded on 31 October, 2011” – stated the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Türkiye, n.d.)

Another fact that shows that Turkey was present in Libya long before the 2014 Civil War: there was ongoing Turkish investments already in the Gaddafi era. In 2010, Turkish construction trade in Libya amounted to 29 billion USD, but after Gaddafi, billions of USD of Turkish investment of were stranded in Libya. (Polat, 2023) It is said that approximately 15 billion USD was in unpaid contractual obligations in Libya for Turkey. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020) This value of Turkey's construction contracts in Libya was 12% of all international construction contracts that time, which was all suspended because of the revolution and what is more 25.000 Turkish laborer must be evacuated from

Libya, which caused a significant concern for Ankara. To show the importance of these investments for Turkey, we should mention here that when the two government made agreements later in 2020, Turkey reached a preliminary 2.7 billion USD compensation deal with Tripoli for these old contracts. (Elmaloul, 2021)

The SADAT, founded by former Turkish Brig. Gen. Adnan Tanrıverdi, has been in Libya since it first emerged. Although it is not an official Turkish government entity, it is clear that SADAT follows and enforces Erdoğan's agenda without the constraints of being one, according to Michael Rubin, a former Pentagon official. The first time SADAT has mentioned Libya on its website was in May 2013, when SADAT visited the country "to determine the needs of the New Libyan Armed Forces". Meanwhile in the 2010's SADAT also provided training and equipment to Syrian rebels fighting the Assad regime. (Esiyok, 2020)

But when the tragic Second Civil War broke out in Libya in 2014, Turkey gradually became involved in the conflict. First, a military agreement was reached between the two countries, then Turkey exported weapons and military equipment to Libya, and Turkish officers began training Libyan soldiers for the Government of National Accord (GNA). Finally, Turkey sent Turkish troops into the conflict. In the next pages I will look through of this process.

The question of intervention

According to experts, „Foreign intervention to civil war occurs when an external state transfers resources such as funds, equipment, weapons, and personnel to a belligerent in a civil war”. (Tekir, 2020)

Some examples of what Turkey has supplied to Libya in the last decade include: Turkish personnel, tanks, armoured vehicles, artillery, drones, air defence systems, electronic warfare systems, small arms, frigates and other naval vessels in the country (Iddon, 2021) intelligence agents, foreign fighters. (Naar, 2020) This list above, when compared to the aforementioned definition of intervention, indicates that Turkey has indeed intervened in the Second Libyan Civil War and its intervention was quite strong and active. What is more it shows that the Turkish defence industry is reaching one of its goals: to securely supply in the event of a crisis. (Besenyő & Málnássy, 2022)

According to Jalel Harchaoui, an expert on Libya and a senior fellow at the Swiss-based Global Initiative Institute, there were two distinct phases of arms shipments from Turkey to Libya:

1, The first took place between January and May 2020, when Turkey supplied arms and forces to the GNA to help repel Haftar's offensive, which it accomplished on June 4. During this phase, Turkey solidified, refurbished, and bolstered its own bases, of which Al-Watiya Airbase is a primary example.

2, After this, the GNA was able to shift from defence to offensive against the LNA, and Turkey began the second phase of arms transfers, which began in June 2020 and in many aspects, continues to this day. (Iddon, 2021)

This two phase also strengthen the fact that there was a Turkish intervention in the Second Libyan Civil War.

Another analyst says the way for Turkey to intervene in the Second Libyan Civil War can be divided into 3 phases:

1, From 2011 until 2014: Turkey tried to restore its stable economic, political relationship with Libya by supporting the central government and the anti-Haftar media and political figures. But unfortunately the breakout of Second Libyan Civil War worsened the Turkish interest in the country.

2, From 2015 Turkey supported the political agreement which was made under UN auspices and UN-recognized new Libyan government, the Government of National Accord (GNA). However the GNA seemed to be not that strong and the foreign powers backing Haftar increased their support and Haftar shockingly even managed to seize Tripoli, the Capital in April 2019.

3, From end of 2019 when Turkey signed some Memorandum of Understandings with the GNA. One to rewrite the maritime borders on the Mediterranean and make a direct border between Turkey and Libya on the sea. The other was about security cooperation in a wide scale including sending Turkish troops to Libya if the GNA requests and the Turkish parliament approves. This happened in first days of January 2020. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

How Turkey intervened in Libya?

In 2014, Libya had two leadership, both with a government and a parliament, and both backed by armed forces. This faction can be called Western and Eastern based government based on geography of Libya, but also by name like “Operation Dawn” and “Operation Dignity”. (Bosalum & Elumani 2015)

After the unsuccessful elections in 2014, the House of Representative (HoR) formed a government in coalition with the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by general Khalife Haftar in Eastern Libya. Meanwhile the UN supported the Libyan Political Agreement which gained the recognition of the UN General Assembly and formed the Government of National Accord (GNA), which was first in Tunis and then in Tripoli, and by 30 March 2016 took possession of government offices, led by Fayeza Mustafa al-Sarraj as Chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya. (Oakes, 2021) The HoR joined forces with the LNA against the GNA in a struggle that led Libya into the so-called Second Libyan Civil War (2014-2020). (Tekir, 2018)

After the start of the Second Civil War in 2014, Turkey supported the Operation Dawn together with Qatar, whereas Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE backed the Operation Dignity led by Haftar. (Garai et al., 2016) President Sarraj has maintained good relations with Turkey and personally visited Turkey twice in 2018, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Türkiye) and president Erdogan also personally visited Libya. (Mitchell, 2021) As support Turkey hosted several media institutions and political figures opposed to the Haftar project on its territory after the breakout of the conflict, with this Ankara also showed its position against Haftar. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

Turkey already supported the armed forces opposing Haftar but after Haftar’s attack on the Libyan Capital in April of 2019, the Turkish military support step a level up. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Haftar’s attack “the conspiracy against the Libyan people” and informed the GNA Prime Minister Fayeza al-Sarraj that Ankara is ready to provide all kinds of assistance to him, in order to counteract Haftar. (Al-Jazeera, 2019)

In November 2019, Turkey and Libya signed a military deal, which deal was ratified in December 2019. According to this agreement, Turkey could deploy troops to Libya when requested by the GNA. (Tekir, 2020) „No other deals Turkey has signed with

other countries has such an open ended, tactical definition”, said Utku Çakırözer, deputy on the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Commission of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) in Turkey, referring to the fact that the agreement does not clarify what defence and security organization it is about and who will control them. (Esiyok, 2020)

On 30 December 2019, Erdogan sent a request to parliament to approve the deployment of Turkish armed forces to Libya for a one-year period of time, which was approved by legislators few days later on 2 January 2020. (Hürriyet Daily News, 2023a) In the end of 2020 Turkey's parliament authorized an 18-month extension of its Libya troop deployment. (Jones, 2021) Since then, the Turkish parliament has approved the extension of the Turkish army's deployment in Libya for an additional two years, starting on 2 January 2024. (Hürriyet Daily News, 2023a) Such an employment of “hard power”, meaning using Turkish military in Africa is quite outstanding from Turkey. (Málnássy, 2023)

Turkey not only voted to send troops to Libya, but also transported weapons to the country, even while a UN arms embargo was against the country. (Iddon, 2021) According to data from the end of 2024, Turkey had at least 3,000 personnel stationed in Libya, (Libya Review, 2024) including about 800 private military contractors of the Turkish company SADAT and up to 50 Turkish intelligence operatives (MIT). (Nedos, 2024) President Erdogan stated that the Turkish troops will not engage in combat, but after provision of the specialized military equipment sent to Libya in spring of 2020 some experts said it was intended to help the Tripoli-based government thwart an 11-month offensive on the capital. One success with Turkish machinery was used to shoot down an enemy fighter drone suspected of coming from the UAE. (Collins, 2020)

Turkey has also helped train of hundreds of Libyan soldiers of the GNA. In 2021 it was reported that almost 4000 Libyan soldiers have completed or will have completed training provided by Turkey. Most of the of the GNA soldiers were trained in Libya by officers of the Turkish Armed Forces but some of them were trained in Turkish land, naval and air force training centers and schools. (Zaptia, 2021) Cooperation between the two countries still continues, with Libyan navy personnel still completing training programs aboard of Turkish Naval Task Force ships as recently as early 2025. (Alharathy, 2025)

According to US Defense Department, Ankara has also paid and called thousands of Syrian fighters to Libya, but the Turkish government denied such allegations. (Oakes,

2021). Although according to some statistics, Turkey employed about 18,000 Syrians to fight in Libya, but some say these figures also include several hundreds of children. After these sources in the first period, Turkey paid 2000 USD per month per mercenary, but later reduced to 600 USD per month. (SOHR, 2020b) It has also been reported that some Islamic State jihadist have also gone through Turkey to Libya as mercenaries. (SOHR, 2020a)

In 2020 Turkey also stepped further by a direct intervention in Libya, putting Turkish soldiers and mercenaries on the borders of Algeria and Tunisia. "Turkey has the largest military base on the Tunisian border, a naval base, (and) camps populated by Syrian mercenaries," said Jalel Harchaoui of the Clingendael Institute in The Hague. (France24, 2020) Also the Turkish military constructed an airbase and wants to establish a naval base in Libya, a plan opposed by Egypt and France. (Jones, 2021)

In addition to the hundreds of soldiers supporting the GNA, Turkey also deployed high-tech military products in the conflict, such as Bayraktar TB2 drones. The TB2 drone are not just one military product on the list, but some says it had a key role for GNA to win the war, because in fact Turkish-made drones helped Libyan government to win battles against rebels. (Soyaltin-Colella & Demiryol, 2023).

Qatar purchased several TB2 drones for the GNA and Turkish personnel went to Libya to operate them, while GNA sent some Libyan pilots to Turkey to learn how to operate Bayraktar drones. As reported the TB2 drones purchased by Qatar is mostly given to the Libyan GNA, because Qatar is investing a lot of money into the Turkish systems and Turkey is operating them. (Warnes, 2021)

Bayraktar TB2 drone is the world-famous product of the company Baykar, which was already used in Libya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Niger, and Nigeria. (Kharief, 2022) This is a Tactical UAV capable of conducting Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and armed attack missions. Some experts say that Turkey uses its Bayraktar drone as an „armaments ambassador” in Africa, which paves the way for Turkish companies. (Kharief, 2022) Bayraktar TB2 Drone’s length is 6.5 meter, the width is 12 meter. This drone can carry 95 kg projectiles if it is needed and its maximum firing range is 15 km. (Baykar catalogue, n.d.) In Libya these drones helped the UN-recognized government contain rebels led by Khalifa Haftar.

Later in the summer of 2024, eventough the civil war ended with a cease-fire, Turkey signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GNA emphasizing that it was a request from Libya to restructure its security sector with Turkey.

This Memorandum of Understanding:

1, confers legal immunity and full autonomy upon Turkish military personnel in Libya,

2, allows the Libyan treasury to support Turkey's activities financially and logistically

3, allows Turkish forces unrestricted access to Libyan territory, airspace, and territorial waters

Seeing this some Libyans analysts states that Turkey "turning Libya into military base for Turkey" (Brahimi, 2024)

International attitude towards the Libyan conflict

Some western countries have decided to distance themselves from the conflict in Libya, giving the war a chance and it soon really escalated into to become the Second Libyan Civil War. It has become a routine talking point for Western states concerning Libya to call for a withdrawal of all foreign forces, hoping that would stop the fighting. But in reality, the presence of Russia and Turkey in Libya has played a crucial role in freezing the conflict. (Lacher, 2024)

On the other hand, some say that Libya has become a battlefield for a proxy war between Russia and Turkey, because Russia did not officially intervene, but the Wagner Group, a Russian state-funded private military company, has been helping Haftar, and some experts even think that Putin turned a blind eye to the Russian mercenary group fighting alongside Haftar. (Bezhan, 2020)

Moscow has denied the presence of Russian soldiers' from the beginning, but on the other hand Turkey has openly supported the GNA from the beginning and then sent some Turkish troops to the conflict. These foreign soldiers made contact with the local community, but after Haftar's defeat both Russian and Turkish soldiers became invisible.

The Turkish flag has also disappeared from the base where its soldiers are based. (Lacher, 2024)

The civil war has officially ended in 2020 and there are some signs for hopes that peace can stabilize in the country after a long time, because of the following reasons:

1, There was a Conference on Libya led by Germany supporting the idea of making peace between the sides

2, The Government of National Accord made a cease-fire with General Haftar's Libyan National Army

3, An agreement was made on an interim unity government under prime minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh in 2021. (Uzun, 2022)

But some experts says that unfortunately the conflict continues, tearing the country apart and refer to the Libyan situation as a „frozen conflict” since the cease-fire of October 2020. (Brahimi, 2024) Although Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh was indeed the leader of the interim unity government but the goal was to organize a new presidential election until the 24 December 2021, but this deadline was not kept and this cast doubt on the peace process mentioning the fact there were no later deadline chosen just an indefinite postponing of the elections. It is also worth pointing out that Fathi Bashaga took steps to form a new government and even got the Tobruk-based parliamentarians support in a vote of confidence but prime minister Dbeibeh refused to hand over power, even though his term was over, saying that we would only hand over power if a democratically elected prime minister takes office. (Uzun, 2022)

How other countries view the Turkish intervention?

Seeing the strategic role of Libya it is obvious that the Turkish intervention was not without the comment of other countries, even though as I mentioned it was not only Turkey who took part of the conflict somehow. However when Turkey decided to send troops to Libya that really made other countries to express their opinion.

The neighboring countries of Libya was more affected as they are more closer and most of them had their thought about Turkey. October 2019 the Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Algeria where both leaders agreed on to support the political solution to

the Libyan crisis. Half a year later when Turkey decided to send Turkish soldiers to Libya the Algerian National Security Council decided to protect the common border with Libya as “precautionary” security measures and revitalize Algeria’s role in relation to Libya and Mali. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

Turkish and Tunisian leaders also had a meeting in Tunisia, where decided to cooperate on providing political support of the legitimate government of Libya, which some critics viewed as the Tunisian president approve the sending of Turkish troops to Libya, which the Tunisian president denied. (Amini, 2019)

Egypt was openly a supporter of Haftar and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi criticized harshly the Turkish intervention stating that Egypt was capable also to intervene in Libya but refrained from it. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

One of the biggest international power, the USA did not really want to interfere with the Libyan conflict, because mostly focused on the combat against the Islamic State and to ensure the safe flow of oil from the region. But in the end of 2019, Donald Trump and Abdel Fatah el-Sisi issued a statement in which they rejected the foreign interference in Libya and expressed the need for the Libyan parties to resolving the conflict internally. (Tlis, 2020)

The European Union was skeptical about the agreement between Turkey and Libya and asked more clarification about it and about the Turkish intervention. But as some experts think, the EU “does not have any real ability to influence the course of the Libyan conflict”. Although the EU sent a mission, headed by Josep Borell to prepare the Berlin Conference on Libya in 2020 January. (Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies, 2020)

Russia in 2020 also expressed its concern about the military agreement between Turkey and Libya and stated through Leonid Slutsky, head of the Duma’s International Affairs Committee, that Turkish soldiers in Libya „may further deepen the recent crisis”, but Russia is pushing toward the political and diplomatic solutions of the conflict. (Anadolu Agency, 2020)

Analysis of why did Turkey intervene in the Second Libyan Civil War?

Studying our topic, one the most important questions to be answered is this: Why did Turkey intervene in Libya? In order to find the answer, I will look at this question from two different aspects: 1, the statements of the president of Turkey and 2, the statements of specialists of this issue.

According to President Erdogan's statement, there are two reasons why Turkey intervened in Libya:

1, Firstly, Turkey has an Ottoman imperial history in the territory of Libya, and that are possibly hundreds of thousands of Libyans of Ottoman ancestry, who are now completely Arabised, but whom Erdogan vowed to protect.

2, Second, Erdogan believes Haftar is a putschist who has attempted a coup against Libyan leaders, backed by numerous foreign powers. (International Crisis Group, 2020)

Although some Libyans have reported to identifying themselves as Arabs and consider Haftar to be a war criminal, not a putschist. (International Crisis Group, 2020)

According to other experts, Ankara has three strategic goals in Libya:

- 1, Enhancing its presence in North Africa,
- 2, Safeguarding its economic interests, and
- 3, Expanding its influence in the Mediterranean. (Polat, 2023)

Other analysts argue that Erdogan can secure his domestic position by foreign political projects such as intervention in Libyan and also gaining access to the natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. (Oakes, 2021)

Some experts clearly stated that in the Second Civil War both side was backed by some foreign powers and the conflict was a bid to secure influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. (Mitchell, 2021)

For Turkey Military intervention could be a future investment

Turkey's presence in Libya now seems to be a future investment in the region, because Ankara can later benefit politically and economically from strengthening its

military foothold in Libya. (Lacher, 2024) “Along with gas, Turkey has substantial investments in Libya which it hopes to secure and make profitable through its continued presence.” (Collins, 2020)

From a Libyan point of view, it is not unacceptable for their country to repay those who helped during hard times. As many say Erdogan has “supported the Libyan issue with all that he could, and he moved between capitals in support of the Libyan issue. (...) Turkey should have a priority in our economic relations, security cooperation, and oil and gas exploration, as it has priority before any other country.”- said Libya’s grand mufti, Sheikh Sadiq Al-Ghariani. (Middle East Monitor, 2020)

Although there is no doubt that Turkey was trying to make some valuable deals with the Sarraj government. For example, the two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Mediterranean Maritime borders which would rewrite the maritime boundaries of exclusive economic zones (EEZ) to allow Turkey to acquire large territories in the Mediterranean Sea and build gas pipelines from the sea or directly from Libya. (Bezhan, 2020)

The maritime memorandum between Tripoli and Ankara declared a 16-nautical-mile-wide corridor from southwest Turkey to northeast Libya as an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that ignores the rights of Greece. (Harchaoui, 2020) With this new border plan, Turkey would have a maritime border with Libya and be stuck between Greece, Cyprus and Israel, and some feared that it might later block some gas deals between these countries with which Turkey has no friendly relations. What is more in fact there have already been a proposal of a pipeline from Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, Greece to Europe, and this new maritime border would block the route of this pipeline. Knowing that the mentioned countries long-time adversaries to Turkish ambitions in the Levant, it must not be a coincidence. (Collins, 2020) Although there are serious diplomatic tensions Turkey seems to be determined to secure more gas reserves for itself in the Mediterranean, near Cyprus for example Ankara already sent research ships and even military ships to delay the drilling of gas by international companies and demonstrate against them. (Egeresi, 2019)

This is all the more interesting as Ankara is pursuing a similar strategy in Syria with the new government: Turkey is preparing a new maritime jurisdiction agreement to rewrite some maritime borders together with the new Syrian administration and to claim a foothold

in the Eastern Mediterranean, reshaping regional dynamics to its advantage. (Badi & al-Jabassini, 2025)

According to the official maritime boundaries, Turkey has no maritime border with Libya, so this agreement has been criticized internationally, while it is also understandable that the previously established maritime borders are quite frustrating for Turkey. (Yayci, 2022). The United Nations approved the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC) in 1982, which codified the borders of the Mediterranean Sea, but Turkey has always had disputes with Greece and Cyprus, which have much larger territories in the sea than Turkey. (Cacaud, 2005)

Trying to rewrite the maritime borders is not only a prestige issue or a simple business opportunity. It is really serious business not only in gas as we saw before but in oil also, if we consider that Libya is the number one oil exporter of Africa and was 9th oil exporter in the whole world in 2021. (Elmaloul, 2021) The question of oil is problematic since the Revolution because there are petrochemicals facilities in Libya which are standing empty and unused since 2011. This would give a huge opportunity to Turkish companies in the petrochemical industry since with little investment the Turkish companies can make them operational again, according to Murtaza Karanfil, the head of the Türkiye-Libya Business Council. (Hürriyet Daily News, 2023b)

Some of the Turkish military shipments to Libya have also been seen as part of the modernization of the Turkish army, since Turkey delivered some US M60A1 tanks to Libya, which are almost 20 years old and are planned to be replaced by Turkish-made Altay MBT in the Turkish Armed Forces. (Iddon, 2021)

Another benefit for Turkey: The use of Bayraktar drones in a real war situation has undoubtedly helped Turkey improve its world-famous drone system. Nothing helps more the development of a military product than testing it in real battles and fights. And Turkey took the opportunity.

Although Turkish support has been crucial for the GNA to maintain its power, and to this date it has received Ankara's full support, Turkey is also trying to get closer to the other half of Libya, which is led by pro-Haftar Benghazi. (Polat, 2023) And to make the situation even more complicated, even though Turkey is in fact in rivalry with Russia in this

region, but also making some compromise. After the fall of Damascus Russia could transfer arms from the Syrian Hmeimim airbase to Libya, and they crossed Turkish-controlled airspace without any resistance. This case shows the paradoxical nature of the Turkey-Russia rivalry, which reflect to Ankara's broader strategy: „maintaining escalation dominance by setting boundaries on Russian operations while leveraging its role as a regional balancer to extract strategic advantages.” (Badi & al-Jabassini, 2025)

It is sad to say, but after a war or armed conflict in a country the reconstruction of the cities, buildings, infrastructure is a big business. Usually those foreign powers can have a part of the reconstruction business who had good connections with the country affected by the war. In this process in Libya Turkey can be and partially already is an investor. (Elmaloul, 2021) Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) has been involved in Libya not only in rebuilding the public administration and health sector, but also in increasing livestocks. (Besenyő, 2021)

With the last years of strong support to the Libyan government Turkey can hope to revitalize the trades volume with the country. Turkey had a tremendous export volume in the last decade of Gaddafi regime with 96 billion USD which drastically dropped in 2011 after the revolution to 1 billion USD. With the intensive effort from both sides, today's bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Libya is 4-4.5 billion USD per year, which makes Libya the second largest export market in Africa for Turkey. (Klein, 2024) But the plan is to multiply this amount and reach the 15 billion USD per year. (Hürriyet Daily News, 2023b)

Conclusion

We can state that Turkey has never been an outsider in Libya. The historical, cultural and political sphere connects Turkey with Libya by a thousand threads. Turkey has deep historical roots in Libya, shares the same major religion, and the modern governments of the two countries have been in contact for decades. So Turkey's intervention in the Second Libyan Civil War was not a surprise, although we cannot say that is was a must for Turkey or an obvious process. We can see that Turkey has supported Libya' stability and the country's UN-recognized government from the beginning. As we have seen, Turkey has provided support in many areas: politics, weapons, soldiers, training. Thanks to this, Ankara has become a major actor of the conflict. This support showed Turkey's importance in

Africa since the GNA can be seen as the winner of this conflict. The intervention also gave Turkey some important opportunities in the field of defense industry, natural resources, diplomacy and trade. On the global scale Turkey is proving its indispensability to NATO and fortifying its regional importance by showing to be able to rivaling with Russia but sometimes collaborating with Moscow to show Ankara's ability to influence Russian ambitions in Africa.

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