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Avelina Tsehovalova

ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0315-5222>

Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University, Ukraine

RESULTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY OPERATION IN LIBYA IN 2011

A NATO-coordinated international military operation in Libya took place in 2011. With their help, the civilian population was protected from the threat of the Gaddafi regime. As a result of military intervention, the dictatorial regime was overthrown. The previous humanitarian intervention had the most far-reaching consequences for both Libya itself and countries with interests in North Africa and the Middle East. The operation was the first experience of humanitarian intervention under the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine and identified weaknesses in both the doctrine itself and the tools for its implementation. The articles research the results of the international military operation in Libya in the internal and external context. It is stated that humanitarian intervention does not contribute to the building of a democratic state and economic stability. Instead of it Libya got in a condition of civil war and showed a tendency to disintegrate. At present, the country’s internal problems are exacerbated by the fact that it is an arena of struggle for the expansion of influence between authoritative world actors.

Keywords: Libya, Gaddafi regime, humanitarian intervention, NATO, “Responsibility to Protect”.

Problem Statement. The Libyan Jamahiriya was a state with an authoritarian form of government, and Gaddafi’s protest regime ensured stability and living standards. Libya has played a significant role in regional policy. It is very important to say almost ten years after the international military operation in Libya whether it was a successful military intervention. Was it necessary at all? At present, the proportionality between potential threats and actual losses is a definite factor in the application of an international military to a sovereign state. Analysis of the results of the Libyan operation, listening to its impact on the internal situation and the international response, requires determining the viable confirmation in the framework of the Libyan test for humanitarian intervention.

Analysis of Previous Researches. In European and American political science, the problems of the international military operation in Libya in 2011 are well studied. Z. Brzezinski, I. Daalder, and D. Stavridis considered that military intervention to protect the civilian population from the threat of the Gaddafi regime was necessary and asked the questions upon the responsibility of the participants in the intervention after its completion¹. Instead, A. Cooperman and F. Kaplan criticized the Libyan operation, describing it as a failure². E. Leopold expressed the view that military intervention revealed the weakness of the UN tools in resolving the situation in Libya and insisted on the need to reform the organization³. There is a range of research on the “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) doctrine and its coercive instrument, humanitarian intervention, including in connection with the 2011 military operation in Libya. A. Williams analyzed the role, which R2P plays in peacekeeping. Describing the challenges, he noted that military intervention should “strengthen local and international institutional capacity, assess and address the risk of atrocities at an early stage, provide measures

¹ Brzezinski, Z. (2011). *Libya Action Isn’t War, But Necessary Intervention*.

<<http://www.newsmax.com/TheWire/Brzezinski-Libya-intervention-MorningJoe/2011/03/24/id/390587/>> (2020, September, 03); Daalder, I.H., Stavridis, J.G. (2012). NATO’s Victory in Libya. The Right Way to Run an Intervention. *Foreign Affairs*. <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/libya/2012-02-02/natos-victory-libya>> (2020, September, 03).

² Kuperman, A.J. (2013). Lessons from Libya: How Not to Intervene. Policy Brief. *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*. <<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Kuperman%20policy%20brief%20published%20version%202.pdf>> (2020, September, 03); Kaplan, F. (2011). NATO’s Last Mission? The Military Crisis in Libya Highlights an Existential Crisis for NATO. <http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2011/04/natos_last_mission.html#p2> (2020, September, 03).

³ Leopold, E. (2011). Libya and UN: Will Benghazi Be Saved From Gaddafi? *The World Post*. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evelyn-leopold/libya-will-benghazi-be-sa_b_837423.html> (2020, September, 03).

for a rapid cessation of crime and rebuild societies affected by conflict”¹. T. Weiss defined the Libyan operation as “the triumph of R2P. NATO has deployed military muscles on behalf of the United Nations and political will has helped to neutralize the field of killing”². R. Shanahan, on the other hand, described the dangers that the inconsistent use of R2P (which he considers to be the Libyan case) could pose to its significance as an international norm. He noted that “the selectivity of the concept has already opened it to criticism by those sections of the international community who see R2P as another excuse for Western interference in the internal affairs of developing countries”³. There are no comprehensive studies of these problems in domestic political science. There is only a wide range of analytical works in which the actual course of events is considered: the articles of O. Volovych, S. Polovyk, and others.

The Aim of the Work is to analyze the results of the international humanitarian intervention in Libya in the internal and external context.

Presenting Main Material. The UN Charter does not lay a solid foundation for justifying or legitimizing humanitarian intervention, but appropriate decisions on its implementation are the prerogative of the UN Security Council. On March 17, 2011, the UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 1973 on Libya, which stated the systematic violation of human rights by the Libyan authorities and authorized states “to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and areas with civilians from the threat of attack”⁴. The conceptual basis of the resolution was the doctrine of “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P). Ten permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council voted in favor of the Resolution, while five countries (Brazil, Germany, India, China, and Russia) abstained.

In fact, two operations were performed during the intervention. The first, held under the auspices of the United States, was called “Odyssey. Dawn” and lasted from 19 to 31 March 2011. The second, “Unified Protector”, was carried out by an international coalition of eighteen states, held from March 23 to 31 October 2011 and coordinated by NATO Command.

According to UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011), the military operation had the following objectives: arms control, ensuring a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace, and protecting the civilian population. However, at the beginning of the intervention, the opposition’s military weakness and its inability to protect people in the controlled territories became apparent. Thus, the command of the international coalition had to reconsider its strategy and focus on overthrowing the Gaddafi regime.

The course of events during and after the intervention prompted opponents of the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine and the military intervention itself to suggest that the Western coalition was thinking more about removing Gaddafi than about what would happen after the intervention. Some proof of this is, for example, Barack Obama’s recognition in April 2016 of the “absence of a plan for Libya after the overthrow of Gaddafi”, which he said was the most serious mistake of his presidency⁵. In June 2017, Emmanuel Macron also called “a mistake” the participation of his country’s armed forces in the Libyan operation in 2011. The president stated unequivocally: “France did not take part in the war in Iraq and was right, but she was wrong to enter the war in Libya”⁶. Given that France was the main catalyst for this military intervention, Macron’s assessment is quite significant.

Immediately after the operation, the country virtually split into separate regions – Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan, led by leaders of tribes and clans who competed with each other. ISIS and al-Qaeda have invaded Libya, making Libya one of the world’s centers of terrorism. Instability, danger to life, and economic devastation led to an endless flow of refugees to southern Europe, and then to central and northern Europe.

¹ Williams, A. (2011). R2P and Peacemaking. *The Responsibility to Protect. Challenges and Opportunities in Light of the Libyan Intervention*. e-International Relations. Oxford, Leicester and Aberystwyth: Creative Commons, 31-33.

² Weiss, T. G. (2011). Whither R2P? *The Responsibility to Protect. Challenges and Opportunities in Light of the Libyan Intervention*. e-International Relations. Oxford, Leicester and Aberystwyth: Creative Commons, 7-11.

³ Shanahan, R. (2011). R2P: Seeking Perfection in an Imperfect World. *The Responsibility to Protect. Challenges and Opportunities in Light of the Libyan Intervention*. e-International Relations. Oxford, Leicester and Aberystwyth: Creative Commons, 26-27.

⁴ *Resolution № 1973 (2011) adopted by the Security Council on 17 March 2011*. The United Nations Organization. <<https://documents-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>> (2020, September, 03).

⁵ Волович, О. (2019). Новий етап громадянської війни в Лівії. *Борисфен Інтел*. <http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/novyy_vytok_hromadyanskoyi_viyuny_v_liviyi/> (2020, September, 03).

⁶ Волович, О. (2019). Політика Росії в Лівії після 2011 р. *Борисфен Інтел*. <<http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/polityka-rosiyi-v-liviyi-pislya-2011-roku/>> (2020, September, 03).

The Transitional National Council (TNC), established under Gaddafi and recognized as the sole legitimate authority in Libya by 30 states, including those involved in the intervention, tried to keep things under control after the former leader was eliminated, but failed to do so. The government, represented by it on November 22, “has made no progress either in drafting the Constitution, or in forming new power structures, or in bringing order, or in demobilizing the militia created to fight Gaddafi and his allies”¹.

In July 2012, elections to the General National Congress (GNC) were held under the supervision of coalition forces. The first parliamentary race in almost sixty years took place in an extremely unfavorable situation. Various radical groups tried to make the election process impossible. Candidates and voters were subjected to threats and blackmail, which turned out to be extremely low. There was particularly persistent opposition in the eastern region, as the people of Cyrenaica felt humiliated and were convinced that their interests would not be properly taken into account by parliament. Among other things, this confidence was based on the disproportionate representation of the eastern and western parts of the country in parliament and reinforced separatist sentiment.

The majority of candidates (3,700 for 200 seats) represented two political forces, the National Party and the Alliance of National Forces, which later formed parliament. The National Party is an Islamist organization led by former rebel army leader Abdel Hakim. He was known to have fought in Afghanistan on the side of the Taliban in the 1990s and was linked to al Qaeda. According to unofficial data, this party was funded by Qatar, which actively opposed Gaddafi and strongly supported the uprising against him².

The Alliance of National Forces, led by former Prime Minister Mahmoud Gabriel, consisted of about 60 liberal parties that positioned themselves as supporters of building a democratic state and “moderate Islam”. Gabriel’s popularity was based on the fact that he was an experienced politician and one of the first to join the opposition.

One of the few points that united the two political forces was their devotion to Islam. In August 2012, the GNC, headed by prominent opposition leader Mohammed Yusuf al-Makrif, began operations. However, this did not change the situation for the better. The country continued to disintegrate into enclaves. GNC proved to be completely ineffective, primarily due to the diversified activities of its members. The problem was also that the winners tried to attract loyal people to work in the GNC, who did not enjoy the respect of the local population. Thus, the Libyan authorities were unable to form a stable government, ensure the rule of law, create a financial system, and overcome the economic crisis.

The situation was exacerbated when a US diplomatic mission in Benghazi was attacked in September 2012, killing four diplomats, including US Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens. The attack had a staggering effect in the United States and sparked public debate over the appropriateness of US military involvement in the Libyan operation.

In June 2013, Nuri Abu Sahmein was elected Chairman of the GNC to replace Muhammad al-Makrif, which meant that radical Islamists established control over the parliament. Currently, the GNC has not sought to curb the growing influence of Islamist groups and in December 2013 adopted Sharia law as the basis of all state legislation. Thus, it is from the Islamists to form new political elite of Libya. At the same time, it mostly consisted of field commanders who had no political or managerial experience and entered into weak situational alliances with each other.

UN activities in Libya have also been ineffective. During the autumn and winter of 2011, the Security Council adopted several resolutions – №№ 2009, 2016, 2017, and 2022. They called on government to restore order in the country and respect human rights. A special UN mission has been set up to support Libya. Assistance was provided in shaping the country’s financial and economic system and establishing control over military supplies. Other measures to improve the situation included restrictions on movement and the imposition of financial sanctions on groups and individuals that undermined order and stability in Libya and threatened transitional measures, but all these measures did not have a positive effect. Although the UN embargo on arms supplies to Libya was imposed, there were no fewer of them there, especially since border controls have virtually ceased because no one has been able to exercise them. The members of the GNC were unable to agree on key issues, such as the terms of their powers and the introduction of Islamic government laws. In an environment of legal arbitrariness and lawlessness, various armed groups, criminal and Islamist groups have been given freedom in the country.

¹ Campbell, H. (2013). *Global NATO and the Catastrophic Failure in Libya: Lessons for Africa in the Forging of African Unity*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 78.

² Палинська, С.М. (2012). Післявоєнна Лівія: Чи впорається новий уряд з зовнішніми і внутрішніми загрозами. <<https://vmv.kyumu.edu.ua/v/p05/ar247260.pdf> > (2020, September, 03).

The next stage in the deterioration of the situation was the parliamentary elections held in June 2014. This time the Islamists were defeated, but the previous composition of the GNC refused to recognize the results, arguing that the turnout did not exceed 30%.

This marked the beginning of a dual power in Libya with the existence of two parliaments and governments in Tripoli (Tripoli) and Tobruk (Cyrenaica). At the same time, in the summer of 2014, an armed conflict broke out between Tripoli in the West (the Government of National Accord led by Faiz Saraj) and Tobruk in the East (the temporary cabinet of Abdullah Abdurrahman al-Thani, acting with the GNC and Feldfarhal's Libyan National Army) which quickly escalated into a full-fledged civil war. Over time, both opposing forces each received their own international support, which did not contribute to the end of the armed confrontation.

The events in Libya, and the Arab Spring in general, in which the uprising against the Gaddafi regime was part, in addition to the obvious risks, opened up opportunities for all authoritative international players to strengthen their influence in the region. It all depended on who would be able to seize the initiative and turn the situation in their favor.

The Russian Federation has significant interests in the Middle East and North Africa. Firstly, Russia is trying to position itself as a superpower capable of confronting American hegemony in the Middle East and offering countries in the region alternative paths of development. Secondly, the interests of the Russian Federation are connected with a large number of contracts for the sale of weapons. That is why the change of political power in North Africa significantly affects Russia's economic interests.

The Kremlin has shown a negative view of military intervention in Libya from the outset, but has not vetoed Libyan resolutions in the UN Security Council. According to Ukrainian researcher Oleksandr Volovych, "Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev did not do so at the time, apparently hoping that NATO countries would be embroiled in the Libyan conflict and that Russia would have more leeway in other regions... Kremlin strategists preferred not to get involved in the Libyan conflict with unpredictable consequences"¹.

Almost immediately after the start of the operation, statements began to be heard from Russia that the coalition troops had exceeded the UN mandate. Dmitry Medvedev stated that the command "interprets the UN Resolution, but does not implement it". "We were guided by the fact that the airspace was to be closed, and thus the basis for the intensification of the conflict was to be destroyed, as well as to disperse the warring parties in various directions, and as a result we received, in effect, a military operation not yet on the ground, but it is in the air, in which a number of countries are participating and to which NATO has joined", the Russian president said, adding that "the Resolution does not say anything about it"².

As the military operation expanded, the Kremlin's official response became increasingly critical. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that the Resolution 1973 (2011) was "adopted hastily" and that the "broad interpretation" of its text by Western countries – and especially the unjustified scale of armed interference in Libyan affairs – was unacceptable. In explaining its position, Russian diplomacy has put forward argument that the Resolution 1973 was stated that a civil war had begun in Libya. In this situation, carrying out a massive bombing of Libyan government troops, the coalition of Western powers de facto sided with only one of the warring parties, which is contrary to international law³.

In influential Russian expert circles, the most common opinion was that in the Libyan situation, the coalition of Western countries had plunged itself into a legal trap. Paris, Washington, and London have loudly stated that Gaddafi should be removed from the post of head of state and declared an international criminal, although no legal grounds have been presented and it is impossible to deny the fact that Gaddafi was the legitimate head of state.

Russia has so far avoided possible criticism for supporting Gaddafi by not using its veto power in the UN Security Council. Subsequently, she repeatedly used the situation to veto resolutions on Syria (where Russia has much more economic interests than Libya), arguing that there is a precedent for exceeding the mandate of the resolution. Moreover, such tactics have effectively freed the Kremlin from vetoing any other similar Western initiative.

¹ Волович, О. (2019). Політика Росії в Лівії після 2011 р. *Борисфен Інтел*. <<http://bintel.com.ua/uk/article/polityka-rosiyi-v-liviyi-pislya-2011-roku/>> (2020, September, 03).

² Российско-Ливийские отношения. *Официальный сайт МИД РФ*. <<http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/ly/?currentpage=main-country>> (2020, September, 03).

³ Кузнецhevский, В. (2011). Казус Ливии и проблема государственного суверенитета. *Международная жизнь*, 5, 53-62.

As early as March 25, 2011, China stated its position on the Libyan operation. China's Permanent Representative to the UN Li Baodong said that China "respects the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Libya", that "the state affairs and the future of Libya should be decided by the Libyan people themselves". On April 5, Russia and China issued a joint statement. The Russian Foreign Ministry's website reported that a meeting in Moscow between Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov and Chinese Ambassador to Russia Lee Hui expressed "serious concern" over the ongoing hostilities and the death of civilians in Libya, and stressed the "urgent need for an immediate ceasefire and bloodshed end"¹.

Renmin Ribao, the official organ of the CCP Central Committee, expressed the Chinese leadership's attitude to humanitarian intervention in Libya as transparently as possible. The article "Events in Libya: Western countries should abandon the idea of world governance" stated: "Under the pretext of protecting the interests of civilians, the interests of Western countries are actually being protected not only in the economic sphere that they rule the world... It was this idea of leadership that prompted France, Britain and the United States without thinking about launching a military operation in Libya". And further: "Confidence in their leading role in the world in the past has brought many difficulties to some Western countries. The new difficulties do not meet the interests of Western countries in the long run. The world is changing; the West also needs to change. If you constantly adhere to the old positions, use past methods to address certain issues, you can not only harm others, but also destroy yourself"². In this way, Beijing allegedly called on the military coalition to act in the legal field of international law, but in reality used the situation to state unequivocally its new geopolitical ambitions.

Russia and China, along with Brazil, India, and South Africa, make up the BRICS, an informal intergovernmental organization established in 2009 to increase the role of member countries in the world economy and strengthen their political influence. It was in the BRICS format in the last days before the adoption of the resolution on Libya which sanctioned Operation "Odyssey. Dawn" Gaddafi tried to find a solution acceptable to him. During the talks with the ambassadors of Russia, Brazil, India, and China, which took place in Tripoli, the Libyan leadership proposed various scenarios for the situation. But none of these countries took the opportunity to influence developments. Most likely, this was due to the lack of a conceptual vision of their place in the large-scale transformations taking place in the region at that time. Currently, at the BRICS summit held on April 13-14, 2011, in the Chinese city of Sanya and where the central topic of the talks was Libya, the participants in the final Declaration limited themselves to general theses: "Our common opinion: the solution to the problem must be provided by political and diplomatic means, not by force"³.

The African Union has taken a rather detached position on humanitarian intervention. On the one hand, his leadership did not oppose military intervention; on the other, in the process of developing the operation, the statements of the AU became more critical. The extraordinary session of the AU Assembly, which met on May 25, 2011, in Addis Ababa, adopted a special "Decision on the peaceful settlement of the Libyan crisis". It stressed the need for a ceasefire, which should lead to a transition period during which the necessary reforms would be carried out, followed by elections in which Libyans could "freely choose their leaders". At the same time, the AU Assembly called for an "immediate cessation of hostilities and a NATO-led air campaign" (but not a complete cessation of the operation), stressing that the deployment could undermine "the very purpose for which it was allowed, the protection of civilians"⁴.

Following this, on June 25, at a meeting with UN representatives, the High-Level Committee issued a letter outlining its position in detail and in more detail. In particular, it was said that "ignoring the AU for three months and continuing to bomb the sacred land of Africa is authoritarian, arrogant and provocative". It was noted that the fighting between government troops and armed insurgents was a real civil war, which meant that the UN should not take sides. "If they (the rebels) do not want dialogue, let them wage their war with Gaddafi without NATO bombing"⁵.

However harsh such a statement may have been, it was not significant in practice. It is known that African countries have a mechanism to counter aggression from the outside – the Non-Aggression Pact and Joint Defense. The definition of aggression contained therein includes, in particular, "the bombing

¹ Кузнецhevский, В. (2011). Казус Ливии и проблема государственного суверенитета. *Международная жизнь*, 5, 53-62.

² Garland, L. (2011). *Libyan Civil War*. New York: White Word Publications, 99.

³ Страны БРИКС приняли Декларацию по Ливии. *Актуальные комментарии*. <http://actualcomment.ru/strany_briks_prinyali_deklaratsiyu_po_livii.html> (2020, September, 03).

⁴ Шубин, В.Г. (2012). Ливия: «Военные уроки» прошлогоднего противостояния». *Азия и Африка сегодня*, 11, 56-58.

⁵ Шубин, В.Г. (2013). Африка и война в Ливии. *Азия и Африка сегодня*, 2, 11-17.

of the territory of a Member State or the use of any weapon against the territory of a Member State” and the “blockade of ports, the coast or the airspace of a Member State”. The AU members undertake to “provide military assistance in the interests of their common defense and security in the event of aggression or threat of aggression” and “to counteract individually or collectively all available means of aggression or threat of aggression against any Member State”¹. But there were no steps to put these provisions into practice or at least to discuss them during the intervention in Libya.

The most “decisive” step in the AU’s efforts to reach a settlement in Libya was the visit of South African President Jacob Zuma as a member of the High-Level Committee at the invitation of Dmitry Medvedev in early July 2011 in Sochi, where the Russia-NATO summit took place. It took place immediately after the African Union summit in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, reaffirming its desire for a political settlement in Libya. However, the conclusions of the tripartite meeting between Dmitry Medvedev, Jacob Zuma, and NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen were not further developed.

The expansion of the international military operation and the victories of the opposition forces split the African Union itself. The only position of the AU that was to be based on African unity and sovereignty disintegrated when several member states, starting with Nigeria, recognized the PNC against it. By the end of August 2011, there were already 17 such countries, and then the recognition from the AU side was announced by its chairman, the President of Equatorial Guinea Theodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo at a high-level meeting on Libya at the UN, which was a clear violation of the African Union which contains condemnation and refusal to recognize “unconstitutional change of government”². Thus, the AU leadership chose a policy of non-interference, limiting itself to statements about the need for a political and diplomatic solution to the situation in Libya, but not opposing international military intervention.

Conclusions. The international military operation in Libya in 2011 had far-reaching consequences both for the country itself and for countries with self-interests in North Africa and the Middle East. The operation was the first experience of humanitarian intervention under the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine. The results asked more questions than answers. The military intervention of the international coalition under the auspices of NATO has formally achieved its main goal – to protect the civilian population from the terror of the dictatorial regime of Gaddafi. However, as a result of humanitarian intervention, most of the existing problems were not solved, but new ones arose.

The new political elite proved incapable of building a democratic state, pulling the country out of economic collapse, and establishing a normal society. Instead, Libya is in a time of chaos. Today the country is in a state of civil war, devastation, is a hotbed of terrorism and tends to collapse.

The international reaction to the Libyan operation was also ambiguous – the world’s leading actors drew different conclusions both about its results and about the very concept of humanitarian intervention. Almost immediately after its completion, its organizers began to doubt the expediency of humanitarian intervention in Libya – similar sentiments were manifested in the political leadership of France and the United States. Other world actors who did not take part in it and did not support it at all, first of all Russia and China, tried to use the situation in their own interests, to expand their economic and political influence in the region.

Thus, the military operation in Libya highlighted one of the main unresolved issues of the doctrine R2P and the tools for its implementation: when and under what conditions should military intervention be curtailed? Should humanitarian intervention be considered complete if the declared goals have not been achieved and the situation in the country where the humanitarian intervention has taken place remains difficult? This problem needs further scientific development.

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¹ Шубин, В.Г. (2013). Африка и война в Ливии. *Азия и Африка сегодня*, 2, 11-17.

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