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American Attitude towards the Arab Spring:

The Libyan Case

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Abstract

This research sheds light on the Arab Spring issue which has taken a large echo not only on the Arab level but also on the global level. Furthermore, this phenomenon sparked a heated debate about the merits of its eruption. This topic discusses several Arab countries that lived under the impact of these dramatic events, including Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya. Further, this dissertation reveals how the long-standing regime in Tunisia and Egypt were successfully dismantled, while, the regime in Libya collapsed only with US-NATO military intervention. However, the Syrian regime is not that easy to be toppled, resulting in endless civil war. Most importantly, this work also highlights the basic role of the United States towards that crisis, pushing for stability and democracy and giving the right for the Arab people to choose their leaders. Finally, this dissertation focuses on Libya as a case study and as an example of foreign intervention, including the United States which took “a back seat” role and simultaneously indispensable role, whereas the two western countries, France and Great Britain, led operations. The dissertation also shows that the intervention in Libya was backed by the UN Security Council and justified under what is called “the Responsibility to Protect” doctrine.

ملخص

يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على قضية الربيع العربي التي أخذت صدى واسع ليس فقط على المستوى العربي بل على المستوى العالمي ايضا. اضافة الى ذلك اثار هذه الظاهرة المفاجئة جدلا كبيرا حول حيثيات اندلاعها. كما يناقش هذا الموضوع ثلة من الدول العربية التي عاشت تحت تأثير هذه الأحداث المأساوية بما في ذلك تونس ومصر وسوريا وليبيا. وعلاوة على ذلك، تكشف هذه المذكرة كيف تم تفكيك النظام القائم منذ فترة طويلة في تونس ومصر بنجاح، في حين كان انهيار النظام في ليبيا فقط مع التدخل العسكري للولايات المتحدة والناو. إلا أن النظام السوري لم يكن سهل السقوط، مما أدى إلى حرب أهلية غير منتهية. والأهم من ذلك، يسلط هذا العمل الضوء على الدور الأساسي الذي لعبته الولايات المتحدة تجاه تلك الأزمة، دافعة للاستقرار والديمقراطية وإعطاء الحق للشعب العربي في اختيار قادتهم. وأخيرا ركزت هذه المذكرة على ليبيا كدراسة حالة وكمثال على التدخل الأجنبي بما في ذلك الولايات المتحدة التي تولت دور "المقعد الخلفي" ودورا لا غنى عنه في وقت واحد، في حين أن كلا من الدولتين الغربيتين، فرنسا وبريطانيا العظمى تزعمتا قيادة العمليات. كما توضح هذه المذكرة أن التدخل الاجنبي في ليبيا كان دعما من مجلس الأمن الدولي ومبرر بعقيدة ما يسمى مسؤولية الحماية.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CCG: Cooperation Council of the Arab Gulf States

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

EU:European Union

FSA: Free Syrian Army

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

ICISS: International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

NAC: North Atlantic Council

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDP: National Democratic Party

NTC: National Transitional Council

RCC: Revolutionary Command Council

R2P: Responsibility to Protect

RCC: Revolutionary Command Council

SAP: Structural Adjustment Program

SCAF: Supreme Council of Armed Forces

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

US: United States

USA: United States of America

USSCO:United States Security Coordinator

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Introduction

The year 2011 marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Arab politics. Unprecedented events of mass demonstrations shook the longstanding dictatorial regimes across the region. That recent phenomenon came to be labeled by many as “The Arab Spring” and sometimes as “The Arab Winter” or “The Arab Awakening”. Voices of hopes and fears were circulating the Arab land. The only protesters’ ambition was to catch the shines of democracy and freedom and to liberate themselves from the chains of dictatorship and suppression. It all started with the Tunisian man’s burning who brought down one of the most durable leaders in the Arab World. Thereafter the domino effect had swept the region which led to the successive overthrow of another three long-entrenched leaders, the Egyptian, Libyan and Yemeni dictators, respectively. However Syria was a different type since the initial popular protests turned out into a non-ended bloody civil war. Similarly important those extraordinary events propelled the US decision making that swiftly put the Arab Spring in its political agenda.

The present research work investigates the Arab Spring uprisings and the US diplomatic responses to them. Though demonstrations occurred in several places in the Arab world, this research focuses only on four cases: Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya since these nations witnessed the largest protests and wider international reactions. The Arab Spring crisis and the United States wavering, hesitant and volatile attitude toward those extraordinary events can be understood by finding answers to the following questions that are the core of this dissertation: What are the real factors behind the Arab upheavals? How did the so-called Arab Spring spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions? Why have the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya followed different trajectories? How did the US respond to the different incidents in each state? What is the new US policy toward the Arab Spring? Why did America adopt a selective strategy? Why did the US intervene in Libya and

not Syria, Bahrain or Yemen? Why did the US lead from behind in Libya? Who took the primary leadership in the Libyan intervention? What is the role of the US in the Libyan conflict? Under which legislation did the NATO intervene in Libya? Which sorts of support did the US contribute to the NATO operations in Libya?

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. To give this theme a full coverage, it is very important to deal first with the Arab Spring events. Chapter one entitled “The Arab Spring Upheavals” will present the grievances and causes of the popular revolutions that unfolded throughout the Arab world. Then, it will examine the Arab-awakening phenomenon in the MENA countries with a primary focus on four states, namely Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya.

The second chapter under the title “The American Attitude towards the Arab Spring” will focus on the US leading from behind policy in the Arab Spring. This chapter will deal also with the US major response to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions and its possible involvement in the Syrian crisis.

“The US-NATO Military Intervention in the Libyan Conflict” is the third chapter that will be based on the “Libyan case”. It will first highlight the historic ties between Libya and the United States. Furthermore, it will tackle the international reaction to the Libyan unrest. Additionally, there will be an attempt to shed light on the major roles that France and the United Kingdom played in the Libyan war, and the limited and back seat role that the US had undertaken to get involved in that international intervention. Finally, this last chapter will try to examine the military and air campaigns that were exercised by the NATO members.

This research will extensively depend on the historical and descriptive approaches. Those two methods are deemed necessary to conduct the present study. Accordingly, this current research is a descriptive one since it will be based on describing the Arab Spring events in different selected countries and the US actions in the different phases of each affected country. To reach the intended objective, this study will rely heavily on the historical method

since it will tackle and investigate a recent past event, that of the Arab Spring, its causes, its trajectories, its upshots and how was the major role of the United States in that historic event.

This topic has been the focus of great deal of a scholarly debate mainly because the Arab Spring incident emerged so suddenly and because the US adopted a new strategic path toward that unforeseen phenomenon. Among the literatures that tackled some points related to the topic under study, there is a unique book entitled *The Arab Spring* edited by Beata Przybylska-Maszner. This book analyzes the determinants of the Arab Spring in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, examines the political, economic and social changes in the sphere of the different Arab countries, offers an analytical comparison of the Arab Spring events in selected countries in the region, defines the influence of the western actors on the path of the Arab Spring and finally analyzes the role of the new media in changing the course of the conflict and covering events to the whole world.

Kamal Eldin Osman Salih, in his 2013 article entitled “The Roots and Causes of the 2011 Arab Uprisings”, argues that the despotic and brutal nature of the Arab regimes, their censorship on basic individual liberties, the endemic corruption and the economic crisis had been among the major motives that led to the Arab upheavals. Moreover, the article tries to find answer to the question: why were the two authoritarian regimes of Tunisia and Egypt toppled quickly, whereas overthrowing the Libyan regime took much longer time? Lastly, this article attempts to analyze why the Arab regimes in the different countries as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Sultanate of Oman and Sudan did not met with major political demonstrations.

The Congress Research Service in the report entitled *Change in the Middle East: Implications for the US policy* states that the political changes that pervaded the Middle and North Africa in early 2011 may have deep effects on the long-time US policy targets in the region. This report deals with some of the policy consequences of the current events in the

MENA region, presents an overview of the US reaction since early 2011 and examines chosen case studies in order to clarify the different queries and quandaries for this issue that Congress and the executive branch may face in the recent time or in the future.

Another report entitled *Setting the Stage for the Military Intervention in Libya: Decisions Made and their Implications for the EU and NATO*, by Madelene Lindstrom and Kristina Zetterlund, emphasizes the process of decision-making that led to the 2011 Libyan intervention. This report examines whether there are any consequences in the future for the NATO and EU to intervene militarily. In addition, this report sheds light on the key role of some NATO members in the Libyan mission, including France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Moreover, it focuses the period from the beginning of the Libyan conflict from 17 February 2011 until 31 March 2011 when the NATO took full control of the military process.

Chapter One

The Arab Spring Upheavals

The chaotic events that swept the Arab World in the late 2010 and early 2011 had attracted the attention of the whole world. These social movements and revolutionary waves across some countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which targeted the oppressive and long-standing regimes in the area, came to be called the Arab Spring. People in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria broke their silence and left their fears behind when they felt that it was high time for rebelling. Unemployment, high costs of living, corruption, suppression of freedom of speech and censorship are common motives that prompted people in those countries to rise in social protests. The oppressive regimes faced demonstrators violently leading to so many victims. Yet, the hope and longing for a better future drove them to risk their lives and sacrifice themselves for freedom by toppling their governing dictators.

Public conviction of the necessity for change pushed protesters to reach their goal, which was the toppling of the autocratic leaders. The men “who have ruled for decades gone in days” (Aljazeera English), Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, in Tunisia, who had 23 years of rule was obliged to flee, while the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, after 30 years in power, was compelled to forward his resignation. In Libya, the unrest shifted toward a civil war, with NATO intervention, the conflict ended with the execution of Muammar Gaddafi’s 40 years of rule.

1.1. Political and Socio-Economic Motives of the Turmoil in the Arab World

1.1.1 Political Motives

Before the 2011 Arab revolutions, the political sphere in the region was totally undemocratic. Under the so called “the state of emergency laws”, the entrenched Arab leaders had accomplished their prosperity and authority. They had established a very harsh political system against their citizens including the denial of political liberties, blatant corruption, press

censorship and violence. Thus, the political sphere represented by bad governance became the top reason for the Arab upheavals (Açıklan and Bölücek 37).

Most Arab governments were well known for their lengthy period of rule (Table 1), dictatorial regime, oppression and violence. They utilised all types of physical violence and even murder to save their regimes from all threats. “Abduction, involuntary disappearances, unwarranted arrest, torture and unfair trials, and even unlawful killings” (Salih 187) were some of the many crimes committed by these leaders against their people. The states of emergency and legislations were the pretext under which the regimes justified their barbarous treatments. Their aspiration was an infinite family reign and their control came in the form of economic deficiency, atrocity and political alienations of ethnic and communal groups (187).

Table 1: Duration of Middle East Regimes

Type of regime: authoritarian, monarchy	State	Period
Muammar Gaddafi	Libya	1969-2011
The Assad Family (Hafez, Bachar)	Syria	1970-present day
Ali Abdullah Salih	Yemen	1979_2011
Hosni Mubarak	Egypt	1981-2011
Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali	Tunisia	1981-2011
Hachemite Dynasty	Jordan	1920-present day
The Saudi Family	Saudi Arabia	1932-present day
Alaouite Dynasty	Morocco	1631-present day

Source: Fielder, Radoslaw. “From Plans to Democratize to the 'Arab Spring'. The Policies of the Administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama towards the Middle East.” Beata Przybylska Maszner, ed. *The Arab Spring*. Poland: Faculty of Political Science and Journalism Press, 2011. Web. 22 Feb. 2016.

The lack of basic liberties was another impetus for the demonstrators to take to the streets. In fact the Arab rulers took control of news media thereby prohibiting any individual or group to proclaim any truth about their abuse of power, humiliation and injustice. Generally, the Arab autocratic governments, especially Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Bahrain and Yemen, imposed a range of penalties against journalists' publications including harassment, extortion and occasionally violence, jail and loss for their jobs (Salih 188).

Arab states suffered decades of bad governance characterized by corruption, bribery, graft and cronyism. Indeed, as a result of corruption, Tunisian President Ben Ali gathered over billions of "Tunisian Dinars, USA Dollars and other European currencies" (Miladi) from public treasury. The Tunisian escapee's large fortune was hidden in foreign nations like Switzerland, Britain, France and Canada. Similarly, the Libyan unrest uncovered for the whole world the real face of Muammar Gaddafi who accumulated over 100 billion Dollars in addition to royal towers whilst he was alleged to be living a very humble life. Public discontent was boosted at such obscene corruption that became a major motive behind the uprisings (Miladi).

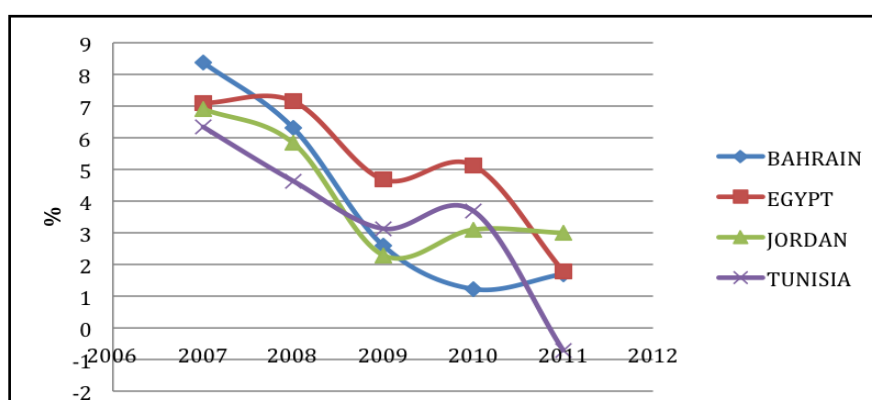
1.1.2. The Socio-Economic Motives

The MENA regions' central location and its abundant human and natural resources give it formidable strategic importance. In this respect, the MENA has enticed the world's attention. Despite their strengths, these nations were burdened with many challenges. States in MENA are ranked into two categories: the oil and non oil ones. Such countries with vast oil exports thought that it could stiffen an autocratic government structures through the use of "large monetary windfall" (Dewey et al. 5) and hence it could gratify their people's interests. But unluckily, those countries saw anticlimax or, in other words, an international economic crisis that ultimately led to social disturbance. Whereas, the opulent Gulf states of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were secluded from the 2008 economic

flop and swimmingly averted such turmoil. In fact, MENA was threatened by drastic factors including slack growth, high food prices, shortage of employment and intense subsidization. These economic troubles made the social disorder of the Arab spring inescapable. Probably, the global financial collapse paved the way to the so-called Arab spring (5).

Truly, the Arab economies were dropping due to the massive international economic and financial crisis. From the mid-1980s, the Arab countries have chosen a program known as Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), under the patronage of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, global financial organisations, in the pursuit of economic liberalization. This model resulted in a decrease in governmental works and an increase in taxation for civilians only. This downfall led dramatically to extensive rises in prices, unemployment “especially among the youth below age 25 who represent approximately 65 percent of the total population of the Arab world” (Salih 187), and therefore causing unstable living standards. However, it was the opposite for the wealthy, corrupt and the governing elite who enjoyed a luxurious life (187). Subsequently, MENA countries viewed a rapid decline in GDP growth (Figure 1) that automatically generated Arab uprisings.

Figure 1: Real Growth in MENA as Percent of GDP (2007-2011)



Source: Dewey, Taylor, et al. *The Impact of Social Media on Social Unrest in the Arab Spring*. Defence Intelligence Agency. 2012. Web. 22 Feb. 2016.

According to Figure 1, Gross Domestic Product Per Capita for Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia is remarkably low. For instance, the GDP growth of Bahrain descended dramatically from 8, 4 to 2, 1 percent between 2007 and 2010. While in 2007, Egypt economy was firstly constant due to the economic reform, however, after 2008 the country was plagued by economic meltdown. Subsequently, the economic and oil crisis rapidly irritated the MENA citizenry since it severely lowered the living standards.

One key demand for which the Arab citizens took to the streets in 2011 was the wide spread of unemployment. For two decades, the cancer of joblessness was seizing the MENA, impacting particularly the young people and largely women as was stated in “Youth Unemployment and the Arab Spring”. According to facts in this document, “the youth unemployment rate in the region is about 25%, among the highest in the world. The situation is even worse for young women, for whom the unemployment rate is about 40%”. In fact, the unemployment recession was exacerbated by the economic deterioration that began in 2008. In this manner, youth opportunities for work in the MENA regions became a very complicated task than before especially for the countries beneath the poverty line (“Youth Unemployment and the Arab Spring”).

Food played a pivotal role in the intensification of the chaos in the Arab countries. In 2008, people hopefully marched out in a series of demonstrations in Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco demanding the end of food shortages. After three years, all of these regions witnessed political upheavals. Actually, food shortage with high inflation led to the widespread of corruption among the labourers, as it was the only solution to live far from the poverty risk. Unfortunately, “The Arab Socialism” failed to reach its objective, halt the starvation problem and diminish the social oppression (Ninet and Tushnet 48).

The preceding reasons have been the fundamental catalysts for the Arab revolutions. But, those primary motives have been analyzed, from comparative perspective, by several political

analysts. Such analysts have made a distinction between “Structural factors” and other “Spontaneous factors”. The endemic corruption, state oppression, the lack of political liberties, the washout of the Arab governments to assimilate and acknowledge the new generations’ movements, and the omnipresent poverty and unemployment among the masses were among the so-called structural motives or the lengthy deep-rooted grounds that led up to the upheavals. However, the spontaneous motives for the chaos in the Arab streets were the tragic death of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia, Khaled Said’s torment in Egypt, and the capture of Fathi Terbel, political activist, in Libya. These actions had exacerbated the unexpected and were the instantaneous reasons for the diffusion of anti regime rallies in the targeted countries. Thus, according to the political analysts the combination between the long rooted causes and the direct sparking events in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya generated the Arab Spring upheavals. Consequently, the structural and unforeseen factors were regarded as “the roots and causes of the Arab Spring” (Salih 188).

1.2. The Jasmine Revolution: A Fingerprint of Political Transition

Tunisia was well known by its autocratic regime which had been ruling for a long time. People suffered from persecution that followed them in each and every aspect of their daily life. Because a large majority of Tunisians hold leanings towards Islamist ideology, they were closely watched by the government and could not exercise their holy obligations, besides; the women were not allowed to wear the veil. Further, organisations and associations were under the supervision of the government. Tunisia’s daily life was characterised by requisition, police roughness, humiliation, and detentions. Mohammed Bouazizi was an example of the people abused by the regime (Açıklalın and Bölücek 35).

This ordinary man had caused the collapse of the regime and the escape of the president Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia; “the most powerful man in the country brought down by one of the most powerless” people (Aljazeera English). More importantly, were the unexpected

transformations that took place in Tunisia in a very short period. Thus, the Tunisian case became the unequalled example of brief alteration of a regime (Açıklalın and Bölücek 35).

Since the French departed in 1956, only two presidents have ruled Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The establishment of the “Republic” in 1957 was associated with Bourguiba, who formed a new fangled state based on his secular belief and focused on equality between man and woman; in addition, he looked for an aspirant teaching schedule. Moreover, Bourguiba had no good relationships with Islamist associations. Despite the fact that he is still seen nowadays as a major character “father-figure of the nation” by most of Tunisians, nevertheless, his regime was far from democratic. He accepted no opposition or criticism and he was the only one responsible for political life. After 19 years in power, Bourguiba in 1975 made himself president for life, and then Tunisia entered in crisis and political disorder. Yet, in the 1980’s the country entered in a period of violence, chaos, and rottenness. On 7 November 1987, Ben Ali, the prime minister, became the president of the country after asking doctors to proclaim that Bourguiba’s health collapsed and that he no longer could rule, this event became known as a “medical coup”. Thus, Ben Ali declared and promised people a better future and as featured in a video by Aljazeera; he promised in a speech that “From this day, no more injustice, no more presidency for life, no more one party state or suffocation of political expression”(Aljazeera English). However, these pledges were not going to be translated into practice and the reality was something different. Under Ben Ali, Tunisia had seen a new dictator; there was no political change, more oppression, aggressive treatment to oppositions, and press censorship. Furthermore, Ben Ali was winning each time the elections with more than 89 percent (Schiller 7-8).

The Tunisian unrest was associated with an ordinary man called Mohammed Bouazizi who lived in the city of SidiBouزيد. He was a fruit and vegetable seller. The event started on December 17, 2010, when he was trying to sell his goods in his cart to feed his family, a local

police faced Bouazizi and banned him from selling since he had no permission from the local government authority. The seller's goods were seized and more than that, he was smacked on his face by a police inspector. He had lost his sustenance on one hand and the police officer who was a woman humiliated him in front of the crowd on the other hand. Bouazizi then came to the town hall asking for help but there was no reply, so he took the last decision and set himself on fire in front of the town hall. Consequently, this incident pushed people to protest in Sidi Bouzid and then protests spread all over Tunisia. Fearing angry and determined protests, President Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia. Revolutions in other Arab countries flamed up and many changes occurred (Laremont 1).

Public dissatisfaction was caused by the pithy surge of food prices and the wide gap that existed between the wealthy and indigent people, which led to instability in the country in the wake of Bouazizi's event. Therefore, President Ben Ali attempted to cope with this status. He visited the self-immolated vender in the hospital in order to give a good image of himself. On January 13, 2011, he declared that he would not run for the following election to calm down the demonstrators. In other words, Ben Ali, by saying this, had no intent to quit (Ch1.Political Change in the Middle East 14).

Unexpectedly, on the following day, Ben Ali eloped to Saudi Arabia. Despite the fact that protests were not so fierce, they would not justify the president's decision to depart so hurriedly. In light of this conduct, there were prospects linked to the flight of the president, he might have received wrong information about the handling of the situation, or demonstrations might have raised conflicts inside the government itself, which made him run away. However, the Legal Adviser of the president reported that Ben Ali said that the latter was deceived because leaving his country to Saudi Arabia was tentative and that his plan was to return after making sure that his family was safe. Besides, he said that the plane did not hang on him which prevented him from returning (Ch1.Political Change in the Middle East 14).

Interestingly, social media had occupied a leading part in the prevalence of the Arab revolutions starting with Tunisia. The Tunisian government was famous with its surveillance upon the internet and other social network “being a world leader in the field of internet censorship” (Ch1.Political Change in the Middle East 17) since it inhibited any kind of chaos that threatened the safety of the country. In addition, previously rough restraints by Ben Ali’s authority against some small protests show effectively the regime’s brutality. Nevertheless, this was not to be virtuous in the jasmine revolution, youth were taking images by their mobile phones, attaching to internet, and looking on satellite channels for the sake of giving a realistic picture of the situation to the public and also to unmask the despotic government. Moreover, demonstrations started at the exact day of the self-sacrifice of Mohammed Bouazizi and people of Sidi Bouzid. Besides his friends and family who were protesting, also people from different places in Tunisia went into demonstrations due to Bouazizi’s self-immolation picture that was publicised on internet. In addition, Bouazizi’s cousin filmed a video and posted it on his facebook account, it was broadcasted by Aljazeera; thereafter, the social media played a major role to spread it. Moreover, since the Tunisian people had this sense of fright of using social media but when the video was put on TV, people were able to watch it (Galvin II 22-24).

1.3. The Egyptian Tahrir Revolution: The Ambition for Alteration

For nearly two decades, Egypt always desired to liberate itself from the shadows of tyranny and dictatorship. Its population’s wish was to live without misery and indignity and to put an end to Mubarak’s brutal regime. Actually, the Egyptians outrage started in 2004 when President Mubarak aspired for a fifth six years term and projected to make his son, Jamal, his successor. As a result, rebellious rallies led by Tariq al-Bishri rose up against this plan. Frequently, many other anti government movements were set up in the capital and elsewhere calling for reforms and rights to people, as *elkifaya* (enough!) and the 6th April movements.

This attempted protests ended up with the government suppression; and its fiasco was mainly due to the poor organisation, the fear from torture and the loss of job. Thereafter, the public anger was further boosted by the tragic death of Khalid Said, the young man in the city of Alexandria, who was brutalised to death by two security agents. His story diffused on Facebook by WaelGhonim, a Google marketing executive in Dubai, who created the page “We are all Khalid Said”(Joffe 520-521).

Basically, the Tunisian Revolution and the toppling of Ben Ali were the leading catalysts for the Egyptian Revolution. The Tunisian victory gave the Egyptian people hope and belief that peaceful demonstrations can overthrow a dictator. Consequently, through the use of social media, all the protesters promised to meet on the Tahrir Square on the 25 January to revolt the long standing regime. Indeed, series of events inside the country and across the Arab nations paved the way for the Egyptians to go to the most unforeseen site, the Tahrir Square and demand the downfall of the barbarian rule in what came to be referred to as the 25 January Revolution (Joffe 520).

On 25 January 2011, thousands of Egyptian had resorted to the Tahrir Square in huge demonstrations in what was called “the day of rage”. The rioters who had ventured their lives for a brighter future were mainly graduate students, jobless, industrial labourers, political activists and elites; they had no specific connections to any political groupings. They zealously wished for President Mubarak to step down because they were fed up with state of emergency, bribery, social oppression and police rudeness. The security forces launched aggressive offensives against the marches, but the Egyptian strugglers outfaced with spectacular bravery slugs, tear gas and flogging. In spite of Mubarak’s hard-handed tactic, the remonstrance forcefully lasted for long days in the same venue under the same appeal, which was the downfall of Mubarak regime (Selim Gamal M. 136).

The insurgence was further intensified; on Friday 28 January 2011 hundreds of thousands of protesting youth adumbrated new marching in Middan Al Tahrir, the day which was far-famed “the Friday of Anger” (Selim Gamal M.136). The late General Chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency Muhammad AlBaradei and the Islamic organisation “the Muslim Brotherhood” heatedly associated to the outrage. On that day, the government quickly declared a nightly curfew with no access to any means of communication to prevent coordination between the protesters and the prevalence of the phenomenon within and throughout the region, the capital city Cairo. Despite Mubarak’s efforts to cease the indignation; the 28th curfew was totally disregarded and the mutinous protesters went out without scariness and expressed their absolute disapproval for the regime by burning its offices namely, the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the police stations. Incapable to dominate the protests, the next day- the 27 January- the president Mubarak proclaimed privileges to the Egyptians which were the banishment of the cabinet and the conferment of the vice president tenure to Omer Suleiman, the former General Intelligence Director, this doing meant that the president Mubarak annulled the succession transfer of his post to his son, Jamal. Aljazeera channel played a significant role in transmitting the anti-Mubarak protests on January 25. Therefore, the government anxiously blocked the local broadcast of that channel with the abolition of the journalism on the January 30th. But, the riots never fell back and powerfully continued the outbreak over the following days on 1, 4 and 11 February. On the 11 February 2011, Mubarak finally leaved his office as a president of Egypt after 30 years rule (Ch. 1 Political Change in the Middle East 20).

After President Mubarak’s stepping down from power on 11 February 2011, Egypt fell under the interim reign of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) that was headed by Field Marshal and Defence Ministry Muhammad Tantawi. The SCAF’s function was to mend the national constitution and formulate a new one, and thereafter to organise both

parliamentary and presidential elections. Two days after Mubarak's resignation, the parliament was dissolved and the 1971 constitution was suspended. Furthermore, the Supreme Council authorised the exercise of some political liberties like the freedom of expression, political activities and the foundation of political parties (Ch. 1 Political Change in the Middle East 22).

On 19 February, the former members of the Muslim Brotherhood organised the Wasat Party, the first and prominent party after the demise of Mubarak's dynasty. Thereafter, the previous Egyptian movement for change that had been harshly banned by the toppled regime emerged again under the new name of "the Freedom and Justice Party" by the Muslim Brotherhood. On 19 March, the amended constitution was presented for a referendum and was approved by the majority of the electors, shortening the period of presidential tenure to only two terms (Ch. 1 Political Change in the Middle East 23).

By the end of May 2012, the Egyptians experienced the first free presidential elections since roughly twenty-nine years. As a result, nearly more than half of the voters elected the Islamist Mohammad Morsi, salient candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, as their new leader. Thus, the future of Egypt seemed shiny for the first time as the popularly elected president pledged for "a civilian, constitutional and modern country" (Vasquet 2). However, Morsi's colonelcy was a dubitable one for many youth insurgent who suspected that the Muslim Brotherhood and the military were allied. Nevertheless, Mohammad Morsi was chosen by the majority as the first Egyptian leader with no military background and became the symbol of democracy, justice and prosperity. However, disappointedly, Morsi's unaccepted legitimacy disconcerted the governments' members as well as the people and panicked from another dictatorial rule by the Brothers. Consequently, the Tahrir Square once again witnessed dozens of Egyptians demanding the withdrawal of Morsi. Soon, the military under Marshal El Sisi,

the head of the army, quickly interfered to cease the unrest. Thus, El Sisi's operation ended with deposing Morsi away from the presidency (Vasquet 2).

By the end of May 2014, the minister of defence Marshal Abdel Fattah El Sisi was elected as the new president with 95 percent of the votes. The newly chosen leader meant a lot for the Egyptians and represented "stability and order" (Vasquet 2). However, the turnout on the day of election was less than 50 percent, which made his legitimacy doubtful. As regards to this questionable results, many pro Morsi elements and Islamic groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, had launched protests against the bloodless "military coup" and scorned the illegitimate ballot (Vasquet 2).

This contested use of the army to depose the democratically elected parliament and president and which restored the military in the government again meant that protests and bloodshed were inevitable as happened in the events to end up the Rabaa sittings. Nevertheless, many Egyptians were very cheerful with the election results and they heatedly welcomed the new leadership because it put an end to the risks of an Islamist dictatorial leadership. To avoid new outbreak, El Sisi has to work hard to treat the political, economic and social problems that the country had faced during the previous three years of instability. However, like his predecessor, El Sisi as a man from the military turns out to be despotic and oppressive (Vasquet 2).

1.4. The Libyan Civil War: The Collapse of al Gaddafi's Regime

The Libyan government after 1969 coup was characterised by a strong predominant system led by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who formed the Libyan "Jamahiriya", wrote "the Green Book" and became referred to as "Brother Leader and Guide of the Revolution" (Bhardwaj 82). More broadly, under what was known as the bloodless coup of 1969, Colonel Gaddafi and his Free Officers had thrown out the king Idris. Then Gaddafi took the power, revoked the kingship and founded the "Libyan Arab Republic". Besides, to this, the Free Officers turned

to be the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), with Gaddafi's command, they eradicated the conservative and temporal thoughts that existed within the government. Further, Gaddafi established some tenets of the "Sharia Law" under which he prohibited Alcohol. He also asserted Arabic as the official language used in different domains (Hebbale).

In the political sphere, under Gaddafi's regime, there was no acceptance of opposition and when someone objected to the government or wanted to found a political party, he would be sentenced to death. In addition, the RCC proscribed any kind of demonstrations, forbidding trade union, censoring the press and nationalizing the oil manufacturing. In addition, during Gaddafi's rule, different sections in the government were occupied by his surroundings to cover all happenings in Libya (Hebbale).

Subsequently, various events took place during Gaddafi's rule had foreshadowed the Libyan turbulence of 2011. Starting with the eastern tribes, which were discontented with Gaddafi's regime since the 1969 revolution because they had lost their effectuation. Cyrenaica and Jabal Nafusa were other examples of tribes that had suffered from the regime's segregation since they were disparaged and not given any importance, which led to the increase of conflict between the east and the west. In addition, there was a strict control over the Libyan army by Colonel Gaddafi to eschew the threat of any military coup. Similarly important, the regime fell into squeezes, two of which were in the east and the other in the central west of Libya. The latter was in Warfalla tribe, where in 1993 a coup plot was disclosed at Bani Walid town against Muammar al Gaddafi. Great number of the plotters were from Warfalla tribe who used to be faithful to the regime, so then the regime asked the tribes' leaders to punish the conspirators but nothing was done against them, therefore, parts of the tribe that were responsible for the coup were assailed by the revolutionary committees (Joffe 522-23).

The 1996 marked an incidence at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli when the prison guard Abdullah al Sanussi repressed an insurgency causing 1300 deaths. Thereafter, the regime pledged to compensate the families of the victims but nothing was done to keep the government promises. The results were demonstrations led by the victims' families that indicated the fragility of the regime. Besides, a scandal had spread in Benghazi that about 413 children were carrying the AIDS in the fundamental hospital of Benghazi. The regime thus did not take a stand to penalize those who were responsible, instead, it reproved the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor, and it later accepted their liberation to their motherland. Therefore, people were despairing from the regime each time and thus heightened the idea of its feebleness (Joffe 523).

15 February 2011 was the starting point of the Libyan demonstrations, emboldened by the success of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, people in Libya were ambitious for changing the regime and drawing an end to the 42 years of Gaddafi rule. Protests at first hand were initiated in Benghazi, located in the eastern section of the country while Tripoli the capital is situated in the west. There existed a kind of aversion between the east and the west. Before Gaddafi coming to power and during the monarchy time, Benghazi and Tripoli were both capitals of Libya in order to extenuate the dislike subsisted between the two zones. However, Gaddafi made Tripoli the only capital that enjoyed more privileges than Benghazi and this raised the tension between the two regions. The stand that was taken by the Libyan government to cope with the 2011 demonstrations was exceptional. Unlike the other Arab countries, Gaddafi accepted no reconciliation with mutineers (Ch1.Political Change in the Middle East 26-27).

Under the pretext of the detention of the lawyer FatihTurbel who was in charge of the case of carnage in Abu Salim prison in 1996 by representing the families of the victims, demonstrations carried on against the oppressive regime. With the social media support,

protesters proclaimed the “Day of Wrath” on 17th February 2011 pushing the crowd to challenge the regime including the cities of Benghazi, Tripoli, Ajdabya, Derna, Zintan and Bayda (Lorenc 241). The Libyan protests were characterised by a robust confrontations with the military forces since it first erupted. Aside from this, Gaddafi mobilised a number of mercenary fighters who were from African origins, in order to smash the demonstrators. Besides, a number from the Libyan military were apostate from the regime and combined with the protesters with their arms. This conducted Libya into civil war with two parts, both well equipped, combating each other. After the 15th of February, in few days the opponents of the regime captured Benghazi and other cities. Then the demonstrations swept to the capital Tripoli on the 20th of February, they set fire on the General Peoples’ Congress and in response to this, the government had bombarded in air raids antigovernment subjects causing many people wounded and others murdered (Ch1.Political Change in the Middle East 26-27).

As the fighting intensified, there appeared some types of withdrawal from Gaddafi’s regime, which included Mustafa Mohamed Abduljalil, the minister of justice, Abdel Fatah Younes, the minister of interior and others, who joined the antigovernment forces. In addition, there was a model of defection in the army, when two aviators broke the order and refused to apply what they were asked to do which is bombarding the protests; instead, they landed in Malta on 21st February 2011. Thereafter, On 22 February, Gaddafi made a harsh speech in which he clearly showed his position, threatened his opponents and described them as “rats” and “cockroaches”(qtd. in Bhardwaj 82). His brutal rhetoric was transmitted on Al Jamahiriya television at the same day. Nevertheless, disobedience carried on with revolutionists overriding Misrata on 24th February 2011. An incorporation of the insubordinate political leaders and defected officials created the National Transitional Council (NTC) on 27th February 2011. Mustafa Mohamed Abdul Jalil became the chair of the provisional government. Thence, things turned to the worst, when besides the NTC forces there appeared

the NATO air strikes against Gaddafi's strongholds, Libya entered in a bloody civil war. Consequently, on October 22, 2011, Misrata militiamen captured and killed Gaddafi in a very humiliating manner (Lorenc 242).

1.5. The Syrian Civil War: The Long and Bloody Conflict of the Arab Spring

On 10 June 2000, Syria marked the death of the president "Hafiz Al Assad" who seized power since 1971. During his three decades of rule, the sturdy man succeeded in bringing stability and prosperity for a land that was firstly inconstant under the Ottoman Empire, during the French colonization and then became tottering by a series of military coups. Nevertheless, that stability came with a cost, which was the Hama massacre. Like the government of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, the Syrian regime under Al Assad was authoritarian and oppressive. The powerful leader reigned with "an iron fist" and strongly implemented emergency laws and excluded political freedoms. One Syrian oppositionist phrased the death of Hafiz Al Assad by saying "The strong man is dead. Now we have a chance" (Pace and Landis 120). Successively, his son, Bachar, took over the rule. To gain his people's favour, the son opened space for democratic reforms. By doing this, he lightened a candle of hope for the Syrians after decades of despotism. That period was renowned as "The Damascus Spring". Definitely, the early months in his office were satisfactory (120). In his speech to the parliament "Bashar al Assad appealed for 'creative thinking' and recognised the 'dire need' for constructive criticism, reform and modernisation" (120). That political liberalization, however, did not last long and Bachar Al Assad soon switched from his permissive approach to his father's suppressive style. Regrettably, people's expectancy for better future was evaporated and their frightfulness for repeated past had been heightened. An outstanding Syrian dissent mightily incorporated together to organize the Damascus Declaration in 2005 and they seriously appealed for the end of the emergency laws and the application of political reforms. The government quickly responded to that political activity and captured the groups'

heads. Nonetheless, the opposition group did not halt but rather became much stronger and founded the greatest anti government organisations in the country (Al Salih and White 2).

When the calamitous uproar for change in leadership and policies swept across the Arab countries, specifically Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, the Syrian president Bashar Al Assad was certain that his country will never experience such revolutions and believed that the collapse of these regimes was due to their pro-US policies. Further, he promised his citizenry for reform but stated in a January 31, 2011 *Wall Street Journal* interview that “Syrians themselves would have to wait for the next generation before they could be implemented” (qtd. in Al Salih and White 2) which was a disappointing speech among the population. Unfortunately, Al Assad’s confidence for non anti government protests turned to be wrong and surprisingly the so called Arab Spring menaced the unexpected Middle East country “Syria” (Al Salih and White 2).

Beside the president’s certainty, there were many other reasons why the Syrian upheavals were unforeseen. Firstly, the anticipated president after the death of Hafiz Al Assad was Basil, his eldest son. However, Basil Al Assad died in a car accident and thence his brother Bashar became the heir for the leadership. At the beginning he was known as a reformer and all the Syrians celebrated his coming. Secondly, the young people who were responsible for the early protests did not become popular in the country to be followed by the masses. Thirdly, actually no one presaged any insurgent movement after the Hama Massacre which was the result of an immediate response by Hafiz Al Assad regime to an attack by the Muslim Brotherhood in 1982 (Bağcı and Açıkalın 15).

The outset for the Damascus protests that dated back to mid March 2011 was linked to the seizure and torture of several children aged between nine and fifteen in the south-western town of Daraa for writing the revolutionary emblem “People want to overthrow the regime” on their school wall. Unfortunately, the youth lost their self-esteem and dignity. For that

reason, their families and all the people in the small city of Daraa angrily went out to the street in peaceful demonstrations, named “The Friday of Dignity”. In response, the security forces bluntly intervened to scatter the demonstrations and butchered four citizens. This violent performance led to newer marches the following days, but, it was rapidly ended up with the government suppression too. Day by day, the regime’s brutality became worse and wilder than before, by perpetrating the murkiest homicides against humanity. Outraged over the number of the casualties, the protesters’ initial demands for reform had been narrowly escalated into a call for the president’s toppling (Al Salih and White 3).

As protests, repression and killing continued to rise; Assad attempted to calm the public discontent by ostensibly offering reforms. At the same time, he entirely recanted responsibility for the offences, placing the censure for the violence on “criminal armed gangs” (Phillips 37) and terrorists, and referring to the rebellion as a “foreign conspiracy”.

Ultimately, the Bachar Al Assad cancelled the emergency laws, permitted the ongoing rallies, accorded the establishment of new political parties, and authorised the dialogues and negotiations with opposition groups. These modest pledges proved to be “too little too late”(3). Craftily, the government offered these reforms while concurrently launching strong expeditions of force and suppression. Afterwards, the regime built up special force famed as the *Shabiha*, or ghosts in Arabic, composed of Assad’s own Alawite sect (Al Salih and White 3). These *Shabiha* militias were ordered by the government to slay and horrify Sunni demonstrators, “intent on stirring up sectarian divisions within Syria’s heterogeneous population” (Phillips 37). In this manner, sectarian tensions increased and the conflict progressively became more and more violent (Al Salih and White 3).

The increasing force of the *Shabiha*, deployed by the regime to suppress unarmed civilians, destroy homes and villages on a sectarian basis, fuelled the anger. Consequently, the dissent factions formed the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to tumble down

the president Bachar Al Assad and defend Syrian protesters from the military. Further, the insurgence speedily diffused into many deprived regions among them, Homs and Hama, whereas, the capitol Damascus and the city of Aleppo did not face any threat till July 2012. Thereafter, both cities saw enormous fighting that obliged thousands to leave the country. Therefore, what began as peaceful and limited remonstrance, suddenly transformed into “a bloody international confrontation”. In July 2012, the International Committee of the Red Cross announced the Syrian conflict as “Civil War” (Rozsa et al. 11).

Chapter Two

US Diplomatic Stand to the Arab Spring

Usually, the US intervenes in all kinds of conflicts and shows greater support to the rebellious movements around the world, whether by interposing directly or indirectly.

However because of lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan, the American administration shifted its policy from “Boots on the Ground” to “Leading from Behind” so as not to repeat the experienced scenarios. As the Arab Spring flamed up on 2011 throughout the MENA regions, the US exercised a picking up strategy by acting with varying degrees according to its level of interests in each Arab state.

In Tunisia, Washington stood as a bystander to the rebellious actions. At first, it was hesitant and cautious toward those events. Although the US did not become strongly concerned with the Tunisian uprising since it had nothing to lose, President Barack Obama showed his support to the people’s demand for freedom, dignity and democracy. However, the US handling of the Egyptian events reflects her intention and interest in the region. The fact that Egypt is considered as a strategic country that plays a major role in shaping the US policies, the Obama administration made inconsistent decisions during the different phases of transition. In Syria, the US sought the collapse of President Bashar Al Assad, thus it stood overtly on the side of the rebels aiding them with different sorts of equipments and even training.

2.1. The US “Leading from Behind” Policy and the Arab Spring

With the expansion and emergence of genocides, atrocities and war crimes, the international law with the public opinion support seeks to put some principles in order to protect countries that experience disorder and chaos. Further, under humanitarian drive that included human rights and other concepts like the doctrine of the *responsibility to protect (R2P)*, the Arab Spring being one example of the implication of such doctrine. This doctrine

was officially coined in the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and was approved by UN General Assembly in 2005 global summit. The R2P doctrine aim was that every country has the responsibility to protect its people from brutality and prevent them from any kind of harm, when this country fails to do this; the task goes then to the international community which can take the responsibility and intervenes forcefully (Wilson 158-159).

Interestingly the international military intervention in Libya was an implementation of the US “leading from behind” policy. Thus in relation to this concept, the US position will be no more at the foreground of the military interference, and it will not exercise power directly. Instead, it supports and helps the international military intervention with different instruments such as, military aircraft, war equipments and other logistic supports. Particularly, when US partners have a deficiency in airy combat capacities and the US owns it, then, the US will lead a forthright airy offensive against the target country; by doing this, the US took the preliminary step. Thereafter its European and Arab allies will embark their main role and complete what the US had initiated. Thence the role that had been played by the US in this context will be restricted to certain area and bounded by specific period (Brom 93).

The American “leading from behind” policy that was experienced in the Arab Spring, when the US applied different airpower intervention, was not the first appearance of “leading from behind” concept. Actually it was needful to employ military interference by the US in various situations that related to Arab-Israeli conflicts in order to settle troubles that existed between Israel and its neighboring countries. The US in those different cases, did not proclaim overtly that it leads from behind but in fact it did so. First, after Israel’s recession from Gaza, the US conducted an international attempt that ended with a convention that agreed upon putting an international unit inspection, EUBAM, situated between Sinai and Gaza Strip at Rafiah passageway. The European Union was the factual actor of the inspection.

Second, the US Security Coordinator (USSCO) for the Palestinian Authority is another example of the US involvement. Here, the military action with the Palestinian security system actually performed by the British and Canadian, whereas, the leadership is from America.

Third, another example is the recent international power placed in the south of Lebanon UNIFIL 2, after the second Lebanon war. In this case, the first step conducted by the US but the rest of the work is occupied by the European power (Brom 94).

When President Obama was elected in 2008, many people expected that with his coming, things would change, they thought that he would give new chance to regain stoicism and equilibrium in the US and Middle East relations. The American position was decreased in the zone because of the war against Iraq, Afghanistan and the war on terror. In fact, Obama indicated when he took the presidency that he would put an end to the Iraq war, shutdown the Guantanamo jail, renovate the Palestinian-Israeli nexus diplomatically speaking and attaining the Arab world. However, in a short time, nothing went into practice and this proved that the new president has followed his predecessors (Hudson 132).

During Obama's first semester mandate, he insisted on reaching the Muslim world in order to change their hostile views of the United States; he declared that "the United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam" (the White House). In June 2009, Obama delivered a speech at Cairo University in which he intended to establish good relations between the US and Muslims (Gerges). He claimed, "I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive" (The White House). This new beginning marked a turning point in the US policy towards the Muslim world. Additionally, a stress turns over this 2009 speech, if it would be exercised in the case of the Arab Spring. In Tunisia, Obama's Cairo spirit appeared to be realized to some

extent; it was shaking with Egypt and Yemen. For sure, this spirit was not implemented in Bahrain and Palestine (Henry, Ji-Hyang and Parks 9).

The erupting of the Arab Upheavals had brought the west attention that was embodied in the embracing of the Arab Spring. Initially, it was a matter of hesitance and uncertainty but when the transmutations escalated in Arab countries; the wonderings aroused amongst the West administrations about the magnitude and the level of those transitions (Heydemann 21). In addition, the 2011 revolts took the US policymakers surprisingly since they had seen the first outburst in Tunisia as a trauma, thus, the US administration did not take a real stand. Nevertheless, when the Tunisian regime was toppled, the US and other western administrators started to take things seriously and supported the citizens' attempts for transitions. This stance was reached only when it became clear that the falling of those autocratic allies was inevitable (Bichara 13-14).

Subsequently, when the decision was taken and people in Egypt agreed upon the political and economic change, the US considered it as risky instead of viewing this as an occasion to manifest US support and encouragement. In this context, Obama stammered, "The United States has a close partnership with Egypt. President Mubarak has been very helpful. We cooperate on many issues and those on the streets have a responsibility to protest peacefully" (The White House). Besides, American Vice President Joe Biden, stressed, "Mubarak is not a dictator" (qtd. in Bichara 14). Further, Robert Gibbs, White House Press Secretary, noted, "We are not picking between those on the streets and those in the government" (The White House). This remark meant to show American neutrality in the Egyptian conflict by balancing between the oppressing regime and the oppressed people, while it, effectively, continued to forward a shameful support to Mubarak until events reached a climatic stage. Thereafter, US administration stood against the two Arab dictators of Libya and Syria. This stance was not dictated by democratic impulses nor was it in response to popular aspirations in these

countries but was rather because both Gaddafi and Bachar are famed of holding a stubborn and hostile policies towards the US and Israel. The American complete silence to the events in Bahrain and Yemen demonstrate American neglect if not disrespect to popular Arab aspiration for freedom. Nevertheless, the Obama administration changed its perspectives when desire of freedom and transition spread to many Arab countries from Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Syria to Yemen. Thus, Obama started to call for democracy in his rhetoric (Bichara 14).

Since the early days of 2011, The US diplomacy was looking for uplifting its ratings in the Arab region, and seeking to reach results that serve and work in hand with its national security department. With the Congress backing, the US administration followed different strategies and methods in dealing with various cases of turmoil towards democracy in the region. On the light of this, in May 2011, Obama summarized a list of substance principles that would serve as a directory to the US restraints for the alteration in the Middle East, also for the sake of making recipient policy options (Blanchard et al. 18). President Obama declared that:

The United States opposes the use of violence and repression against the people of the region. We support a set of universal rights. Those rights include free speech; the freedom of peaceful assembly; freedom of religion; equality for men and women under the rule of law; and the right to choose your own leaders _ whether you live in Baghdad or Damascus; Sana'a or Tehran. And finally, we support political and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa that can meet the legitimate aspirations of ordinary people throughout the region...America respects the right of all peaceful and law-abiding voices to be heard, even if we disagree with them. We look forward to working with all who embrace genuine and inclusive democracy. What we will oppose is an attempt by any group to restrict the

rights of others, and to hold power through coercion_ not consent. Because democracy depends not only on elections, but also strong and accountable institutions, and respect for the rights of minorities. (The White House)

Generally the United States did not frame the expansion of revolutions in both countries Tunisia and Egypt, but rather kept observing the “Tahrir” protesters handling their mission. The above speech of May 2011, Obama wholly supported transition and democracy in those countries. However, when it comes to practice, the US offered no assistance for the reparation of the demolished Middle Eastern establishments that were affected by the upheavals. There were no Marshall plans to be given (Gerges). Significantly Obama looking only for his interest and for his policy priorities, thus, the Arab Spring was the concrete proof of his real intention in the region.

2.2. The US Support to the Tunisian Uprisings

The Tunisia-US relations traced back to 200 years ago, preceding the French colonization. Tunisia was the center of main struggles during World War II, besides, the American troops liberated the Tunisian territory in 1943 when attempting to invade Italy; this liberation was a portion of the Allied forces campaign. Furthermore throughout the Cold War, Tunisia supported and followed a sturdy Western foreign policy regardless of a short economic experience in 1960s with socialism. The Tunisian-US relationships flourished to cover the economic sector. On the light of this, the US offered awards, loans, technical services. Thus in 1990, they found a bilateral investment treaty and signed a pact to eschew double taxation in 1989 (Jebel 13).

During Ben Ali’s rule, US-Tunisian ties focused on military cooperation despite the fact that the Tunisian government put major pressure on rising trade. For the US, Ben Ali was seen as an ally, modest Arab leader, since he was supporting the US efforts against terrorism. In addition Tunisia collaborated and assisted with NATO operations by providing supervision

against terrorism in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Tunisia authorized the NATO boats in the seaport of Tunis. Conversely Tunisia did not stand up either for the 1991 Gulf War or for the war against Iraq in 2003. Although the correlation between Tunisia and US was careful and not very close but Tunisia can be considered as the US friend; since they share and cooperate in different domains especially in security (Arieff 7).

Initially the blossomed revolution in Tunisia did not gain much support from the US since this revolution was unpredicted and complicated, thus making decisions difficult to be taken. Furthermore before the 2011 event, The US followed good relations with the Tunisian president Ben Ali and saw him a “model US client”, powerful, stabilized and secular. However Tunisia was not of much concern or major priorities that serve US interest, therefore the US show unwillingness to embrace the calling of freedom and dignity from the Tunisians. In the 2011 State of the Union Address, Obama elucidated how the US government views the Tunisian revolution as a separate episode that improbably sprouts to the neighboring regions. Thence the American response to the Tunisian outset was a bit sophisticated (Cooper).

After the incident of Mohammed Bouazizi self-immolation that pushed many Tunisian people to protest against the authorities, the US president Barak Obama showed clearly his perception of the Arab Spring and described it as “historic opportunity”. In contrast to those who thought that the Arab Spring would strengthen the anti-western extremists, Obama biased with the Arab revolt. He estimated the Arab Spring since it gave the opportunity to exhibit that the US revalues the Tunisian street vendor dignity more than the absolute power of the dictator. Moreover, Obama insisted that the United States supports the transition that pressed the right of common people to be the decision makers (Heydemann 21-22). He said, “The United States of America welcomes change that advances self-determination and opportunity. Yes, there will be perils that accompany this moment of promise. But after decades of

accepting the world as it is in the region, we have chance to pursue the world as it should be” (qtd. in Heydemann 22).

2.3. The Obscure Stance of the United States toward the Egyptian Revolution

Egypt has always been an important and indispensable country for the United States. Since it was the most populous Arab state located in the center of the Middle East bordering the Jewish state on the one hand and the US hostile states like Sudan, Libya, and Hamas authority in Gaza on the other hand. Moreover 8% of global trade goes through the Suez Canal. Not to forget its control over the Mediterranean Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Additionally with its oldest and religious institutions as Al Azhar University, Egypt won the intellectual leadership in the Arab world (Bolme 28).

During the Cold War era, the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, were competing over the pyramids country to be on their sides. But, Egypt chose to be first an ally with the USSR then it defected permanently to be with the US. By 1978, the former president Anwar Sadat and the US president Jimmy Carter contracted an agreement to declare a peace year in the Middle East which led to Egypt-Israel peace treaty of 1979. In return, the US pledged to offer financial and military assistance for both countries (Bolme 28). Ultimately the bilateral relationship between Egypt and US were developed in the following years where the Middle Eastern country became a key US ally.

Figure 2: Map of Egypt



Source: Sharp, Jeremy M. *Egypt: The January 25 Revolution and Implications for US Foreign Policy*. Congressional Research Service Report. 2011. Web. 10 May 2016.

The Egyptian 2011 popular upheavals put the United States in a real dilemma. When Obama took the presidency in 2009, he shifted the emphasis of the foreign policy away from democracy promotion entirely, and instead was interested in what he was believed as Arab-Israeli peacemaking. The new US president, Barack Obama intended to alienate himself from George Bush focus for promoting democracy in the Arab world. With this new US approach towards the Egyptian government, the American administration attempted also to improve the US-Egyptian links that had been deteriorated under Bush administration. Generally, America always pushed the Egyptian administration for free political process both overtly and privately, but, president Obama never criticized Egypt dictatorship in public (Egypt: The January 25 Revolution 11).

Since coming to office in 1981, Hosni Mubarak widely supported US policy initiatives and remained in peace with the Jewish state. During the events of the Arab Spring 2011, America and Israel feared to lose their benefits in the Middle East. So, the US tried first to be behind the longstanding ally, Hosni Mubarak. Soon after the 25 January revolution, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that “the Egyptian government was stable and looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people” (qtd. in Selim Hend 8). At the same time, the Vice President Joe Biden said that “Mubarak has been an ally of ours in a number of things and he has been very responsible on normalizing relationship with Israel...I would not refer to him as dictator” (qtd. in Selim Hend 8). Clinton and Biden comments were not well received by the demonstrators who called for Mubarak resignation and swiftly continued their large scale of demonstrations in the face of increased oppression by the security forces (8).

When the protests had been heightened in the last days of January 2011, the Obama administration planned “a middle course” which was its will to assist the Mubarak regime to satisfy the Egyptians’ requirements and to not remove the president. By 28 January, for instance, after two days of popular protests that witnessed a wild and repressive response from the security forces, the president Obama said publically that Mubarak government should stop using force and violence against civilians as a respect to human universal rights however he mentioned his desire to continue his cooperation with a more democratic Egypt (Aftandilian 7).

The US administration’s reaction to the revolution was rapid since Barack Obama underestimated the impact of the popular protests when he first told Mubarak to reform and not to resign. When Mohamed El Baradei arrived to Egypt and associated to the revolt, he criticized the US attitude by saying: “To ask a dictator to implement democratic measures after 30 years in power is oxymoron. It will not end until Mubarak leaves” (qtd. in Elmasry7).

In fact, the initial response of the Obama administration toward the Egyptian's calls for democracy totally contradicted with Obama's 2009 speech in Cairo in his early years. In the speech, he emphasized his belief that people everywhere aspire for basic liberties when he stated that "I do have unyielding belief that all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed" (The White House).

Soon however, the US stance to the revolt had been changed on the following days because of the protesters' success. On 30 January 2011, the American president Barack Obama sent the former US Ambassador to Cairo to tell the president Mubarak to begin "an orderly transition" (CNN). Thus, Mubarak conferred the vice president office to Omar Suliman and eventually declared that he would not seek reelection the following time. However, this announcement seemed to be too late for the Egyptians. As the demonstrations had further intensified, Obama called up Mubarak on 1 February to quicken the operation but there was no alteration. With more marches and more violence, Barack Obama told Mubarak publically that the status quo was unsecure and that peaceful transition must start "now" (CNN). Thereafter, the Egyptian military turned its side with the protesters. On 31, the military promised to safeguard the Egyptian people and guarantee their demands. Obama reacted positively and eulogized the military for their patriotism. Mubarak then surrendered and departed from the presidency on February 11 (Aftandilian 7-8).

In effect, the US administration adopted a vague attitude from the start of the chaos till Mubarak resignation; however, it stressed democracy after Mubarak removal. First, US president Barack Obama backed his helpful ally Hosni Mubarak, who gave the US access to the Suez Canal and over flight capability. Then, its policy changed a bit when Obama told Mubarak to set the possible reforms and halt the violence against the civilians, as support to the Egyptian protesters, and he did not want to sacrifice America's longtime ally, Mubarak. To keep his partner in rule, Obama helped the president Mubarak with smart ideas to deal

with demonstrations secretly. In fact, Mubarak appointment for a vice president for the first time after long years and his pledge not to participate in the presidential elections were one of Obama's advices to end the Egyptians' anger against their president. However, the US efforts to protect Mubarak did not succeed in front of the strong demonstrations and the military defectors backing them. Surprisingly, the US abandoned their henchman, emphasized democracy and welcomed the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in the democratic presidential elections.

While the first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, took leadership of Egypt in 2012, the United States of America hurried to cooperate with the new incoming government in order to save its interests. When the US officials had been asked how it would work with the Muslim Brotherhood president, US officials answered that they would "Judge by actions, not words" (qtd. in *Egypt: Background and US relations* 15). On 11 September 2012, thousands of militant Islamists attacked the US embassy in Cairo, bringing down the US flag and substituting it with Islamic banner because they were angered over an anti prophet cartoon film. This incident was an opportunity for the president Morsi to reinsure the US friendship, but, Mr. Morsi did not directly condemn the attack and apologized to the US but he instead condemned the film (15). The next day, president Obama said: "I don't think we would consider them [Egypt] an ally, but we don't consider them an enemy" (CBS News). However despite all this, America continued its partnership with the Islamist leader Morsi.

The Obama administration also overlooked the new Egyptian ties with Palestinian Hamas. More than that, it praised Morsi's role in realizing a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in November 2012 where the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that "I want to thank President Morsi for his personal leadership to de-escalate the situation in Gaza and end the violence." (qtd. in *Egypt: Background and US relations* 15-16). In the late November, however, Morsi's issuance of a debatable constitutional declaration had separated the

government and provoked widespread demonstrations in the Tahrir Square and elsewhere seven months later. Meanwhile, the Egyptian military ended the unrest by taking the first civilian leader in Egypt to jail. Midst the turmoil, there was an omnipresent rumor that the United States had and still has a relation with Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. (Egypt: Background and US relations 15-16).

On the same day of Morsi's ouster on 3 July 2013, President Obama stressed that "The United States does not support particular individuals or political parties" (The White House) When people took to the streets against Morsi's rule, the United States stood over the fence taking no side, backing neither the protesters nor the Muslim Brotherhood. In the above statement, Obama disregarded the fact that the Egyptian military had engaged in the Egyptian political scene and had deposed president Morsi. The US president also stated in his 3 July speech that "We are deeply concerned by the decision of the Egyptian Armed Forces to remove President Morsi and suspend the constitution" (The White House) In fact, Barack Obama's words reflected that Washington eschewed from calling the removal of Morsi as a "Coup". The reason behind the US denial of using the term "Coup" was not to be restricted by US law to cut off military assistance to Egypt. After consultation with its lawyers, the American administration avoided the legislation, by not describing the political events in Egypt as a military coup (Elmasry 29). Insomuch as the US suspended its aid to the Egyptian military, her advantages in the Middle East will be threatened. Therefore to continue her positive role in preserving the Egyptian Israel peace treaty, progressing economic opportunities and combating terrorism, the administration's only option was to keep its military services going on (Tauber 37).

Once the minister of defense Marshal Abed Al Fattah Al Sisi took Egypt, the United States found herself in a big bind due to her inconsistent position in the previous revolutions, the 25 January 2011 and the 3 July 2013. Therefore, to exit from that dilemma and to retain Egypt's

trust again, America had to prepare a very coherent strategy. At that time, the country did not reach yet democracy and America should not pretend that and should find another tactic.

What Washington should realize is to maintain its cooperation with Al Sisi administration on the one hand and to think about ways to back the Egyptians' desires for "Bread, freedom and justice" on the other hand. However, the basis of that policy was, "What" the United States should support and not "Whom" (Dunne 4).

2.4. The Potential US Involvement in Syria

Soon after Bachar Al Assad succeeded his father as president in July 2000 and George Bush win the US presidential elections in November 2000, the US-Syrian relations started to grow conflicting and eventually turned into intense hostility. Since that time, Washington and Damascus were always on clashes, disagreements and confrontations. In the aftermath of September 11th attacks, the Syrian government did not cooperate with the US to combat terrorism but instead it supported Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. In the eyes of America, these organizations are terrorist ones; however, Bachar responded that "they are not terrorist movements but national liberation movements"(qtd. in Maoz 4). Consequently, Bush accused Syria of sponsoring terrorism (Maoz 1-4).

Another collision between the two leaders was the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, which Syria objected vociferously. Bachar understood that this war was a US-Israel joint effort to debilitate Syria and the Arab world in order to stiffen Israel and save her interests. A serious dispute arose when the Syrian regime permitted Sunni Muslim extremists to travel to Iraq to back Saddam Hussein's government. Moreover, the United States saw Syria as a member of Bush's "Axis of Evil" which included Iran and North Korea and as a risk to her interests since it produced Weapons of Mass Destruction with Russian, Chinese and North Korean assistance. In addition, what hurt the US-Syrian relations was the decline of the Syrian-Israeli peace talks. Further, Syria's occupation of Lebanon was drastically opposed by Bush who

ordered Damascus to withdraw its military forces since 2003 but no avail. Then after the murder of Rafiq Hariri on 14 February 2004, the United States put greater pressure on Syria to exit from that country. However, Damascus did not move back until 26th April 2005. In the light of that antagonism, the US president George Bush came to the conclusion that Bachar was “Anti-American” and “Terror-sponsoring tyrant” and also posed a danger for America’s interests in the Middle East (Maoz 4-6).

The outbreak of the Syrian revolution in March 2011 met with Washington’s indetermination for whether or not to interfere. The US was almost unable to deal with the hazards and the ramifications of such intervention. Furthermore, Syria was a totally different case than Libya. Firstly, Syria owned stronger defenses, as Chemical Weapons, dependable air defense system and resolute military. Secondly, unlike Libya, it never thought or attempted to smash its military. Thirdly, 90 percent of the Syrian military are Alawite, the same religious Sect of the Assad family which constitutes only 12 percent of the whole population. Moreover, the Assad’s father like son made the army as one pillar of their power. Fourthly, the ruling dynasty had the full confidence in its faithful military that will do anything to keep his Sect in rule. Fifthly, the army expenditure of Syria was \$2.1 billion, unlike Libya which had outlaid only \$728 million on her military. Interestingly, the Syrian army was classified as the second robust and professional Arab army after Egypt (Kane). Similarly important, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin Dempsey stated that “a long-term, sustained air campaign would pose a challenge because Syria’s air defenses are five times more sophisticated than Libya’s”. He also added: “Syria’s chemical and biological weapons stockpile is 100 larger than Libya’s” (qtd. in Kane).

In addition to its vigorous defense, Syria also constituted a much more “complicated political situation” for America. Actually, America saw Damascus as an important site for undermining Iran and cutting off one of its arms- the fall of the Bachar regime means the fall

of Teheran too; however, the results of such involvement will probably lead to a serious sectarian infighting. Syria's location in the Levant, bordering important nations like Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, and its alliance with Russia, China and Iran made her very intricate political spot. For that reason, any attempt of intervention will cause severe disorder and instability throughout the region. Consequently, no international player had the will or the desire to face the possible perils that would happen after Bachar's demise. US officials calculated that the collapse of the Assad government will provoke one of the two scenarios. The first one was the probable intensification of the sectarian and ethnic conflict, Sunnis against Alawi and Kurds against Arabs. The second one was the potential obsession of the Muslim Brotherhood on the throne. The American officials were also frustrated that sectarian and ethnic dispute to reach Syria's neighboring nations, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Certainly, tumbling the Assad regime will guarantee the US advantage with Israel (Kane).

From the beginning of the Syrian spring in 2011, America instigated unilateral and multilateral policies to break up the violence, end Bachar Al Assad regime and build up new democratic government. During the revolution's initial stage, when the Syrian government resorted to the military to quell the peaceful demonstrations, the Obama administration condemned the regime's suppressive attacks, added financial, economic and political sanctions on President Bachar Al Assad and pressed the government to initiate reforms that would satisfy the protesters' needs. However, the Obama administration called for Al Assad resignation since August 2011 as a response to the president brutal tactics and his rejection for stepping down. Over the succeeding year, the US officials tried to put an end to Al Assad dynasty by working multilaterally through the United Nations of the Security Council (UNSC). With the help of the international community, the US aim was to penalize the regime, end the hostilities and agree upon a political transition course. Unfortunately, all of

the US attempts evaporated with the Russian and Chinese refusal of any UNSC resolution that will harm Syria and its leader Bashar Al Assad (Armed Conflict in Syria15).

Despite the fact that the United Nations failed to reach an endorsement to resolve the Syrian issue and the departure of the US embassy, Robert Ford from Syria, America did not give up but it made bids to embrace the international policy coordination through backing the Syrian people such as the Friends of Syria forum. The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press poll announced that two-thirds of the American people were objecting any sort of US military intervention in Damascus. Similarly, the White House and the Congress were also opposing such military involvement or lethal aid to the opposition. Thus, if the US responded militarily, it would circumvent the Security Council, the congress as well as her country as a whole. During the 2012 summer, however, president Obama put a remark to the Syrian president Bashar Al Assad that any use of Chemical Weapons against the civilian is “a red line” that would “change his calculus”. The next year, the number of the casualties had reached over 70.000 and the number of the refugees had exceeded over the millions. Subsequently, the US provided humanitarian assistance to UN agencies and non lethal services to the rebel forces (Syria: Unrest and US Policy 9; Armed Conflict in Syria 15-16).

Pretensions of chemical weapons use in the Syrian war began to appear in December 2012. Actually, both Al Assad government and the opposition forces denied any accountability of any chemical weapons attacks and blamed each other for the committed crisis. By March 2013, the Syrian government invited the United Nations (UN) to undertake an exploration into the implementation of the chemical weapons by the dissent. Concomitantly, other states including France and the United Kingdom sought from the UN to generalize the inquiry to Syria as a whole. Accordingly, fact-finding mission labeled as the UN Mission to Investigate Allegations of the Use of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic was founded by Ban Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary General on 21 March. In April 2013, the US Intelligence

community was asserting “With varying degrees of confidence” the utilization of the chemical weapons by Al Assad regime. However, that evaluation lacked credibility since the UN did not continue their mission yet (Syria Chemical Weapons 1).

On 21 August 2013, confident reports showed that hundreds of Syrian people including women and children had been killed as a result of chemical weapons attacks at the Suburbs of Damascus by the Syrian government. Unfortunately, the International Intelligence entities agreed that Bashar Al Assad was guilty. This attack was the first and latest incident perpetuated by Al Assad loyal forces after Obama’s warning statement for his possible military intervention in Syria. Most importantly, the US was mainly worried about the negative upshots and the challenges that would face in the future, when it would not take action against nations like Syria and Iran (Syria Chemical Weapons 1).

As a result of the 21st August 2013 attacks, the American administration saw that it was time to respond to the Syrian crisis. Promptly, the US sought help from its international counterparts like France and the UK, which was her first move of its major response. Then, on 24 August, the US placed her battleships into the Mediterranean Sea explaining to the Al Assad government its serious intention for using force, the second part of her major response. The next day, the president Bashar Al Assad did not accept the false accusation that was directed to his government, holding the full responsibility of the attacks to the opposition. At the same time, the Syrian government called the UN inspectors to investigate the suspected attacks once again to prove its guiltlessness. However, on 28th August, president Obama declared that America had decisive proof that the Syrian government was the only accountable for the bloodshed. By 31 August, Barack Obama asked the congress to give him the permission to respond militarily in Syria, the third and most significant fraction of America major response to the Syrian war (Syria Chemical Weapons 2).

Russia, Syria's ally, had objected to the US planned decision to react militarily to the crisis where it announced that the confirmation embroiling Al Assad administration was wrong and the true culpable were the opponents. By 9 September, Russia proclaimed a suggestion to protect her friend, Syria, from such intervention: if Syria approved to eliminate its chemical weapons and to permit an international control over the country's chemical armory, America would relinquish its direct military involvement toward Syria. Subsequently, both the US and Syria accepted the Russian proposal. The following days, the United States and Russia met together to agree on a draft proposal, and Obama put off his resolution to strike Syria. By 14 September, Russia and the US declared a concluded plan to remove Syria's chemical weapons renowned as the Frame Work for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons. Actually, the US Central Intelligence Agency program (CIA) to train and equip the opposition was planned on June 2013, but it was not accepted due to concerns. Weeks after Russia proposal to prevent a US military strike in Syria, the American program (CIA) finally reached the Syrian rebels. By this doing, the US now participated in the Syrian war (Blake and Mahmud 250).

Chapter Three

The US-NATO Military Intervention in the Libyan Conflict

Inspired by the escalated events of 2011 and the toppling of both the Tunisian and Egyptian regimes respectively, the Libyan people held the torch of freedom and rebelled against the dictatorial regime. The February 2011, witnessed a large scale of revolution that swept the Libyan territory that developed toward a civil war with two armed sides combating each other, the regime and the rebel forces. Thus, things turned to be worst when the US and its allies conducted a military intervention in order to protect civilians who were tortured and assaulted by Gaddafi's forces in Libya under what it assumed as a humanitarian consideration or under the so-called "Responsibility to protect" doctrine . After a series of bombings and air strikes led by the US and some NATO countries, Gaddafi was not that easy domino to be toppled; however, the conflict ended with capturing and accusing Gaddafi and thus putting an end to his 42 years of rule.

3.1. The Early US-Libyan Relationships

Libya was not constantly hostile and odious state for the west. Since independence from Italy 1951, the King Idris granted the United States and the United Kingdom rights to keep their military vessels at Wheelus Field and Cyrenaica. When the Cold War arose in the Middle East, the Libyan kingdom was strongly aligned with the Western powers rather than the Arabs. Once the oil was discovered in the Libyan soils in the late 1950s, the Libyan-Western relations were highly deepened. Unfortunately, King Idris's monarchy came to sudden end in 1969 after a revolutionary coup by a group of Colonels among them Muammar Gaddafi. Those coup leaders' desire was to put an end for both US and UK military presence in the Libyan waters. When Colonel Muammar Gaddafi took power, he cut off Libya's ties with the west, pushed out US and British military bases from Libya and banned the American oil firms and other foreign companies to invest in his petroliferous region. The new Libyan

government confirmed neutrality, promised to back the Palestinians and warned to respond to any kind of colonialism or imperialism in the world (Alterman 22).

Gaddafi's sponsoring of terrorism had antagonized the US, other western powers and even some MENA countries. When the US embassy in Tripoli had been attacked by pro-Iranian protesters in 1980, the US detached all diplomatic dealings with Libya and designated Libya as a terrorist state. By 1981, America exploded two Libyan airliners over the Gulf of Sirte, Libya claimed that the US had violated its territory. In 1986, the US initiated a list of economic sanctions against Libya, including a freeze of Libyan resources in the US banks, a prohibition of all trade dealings with the region and oil embargo. In 5 April 1986, Libya had been accused in the terrorist attack of the West Berlin discotheque, which was a famous site for US military staff. In return, the American president Ronald Reagan bombed Tripoli, Benghazi and the Libyan military missiles in 15 April 1986. The US attack killed up approximately 100 civilians, Muammar Gaddafi's adopted daughter was one of the victims (A History of Libya's Ties with the US). Mr. Reagan justified the offence by saying: "When our citizens are attacked or abused anywhere in the world on the direct orders of hostile regimes, we will respond so long as I'm in this office" (The White House).

In revenge for the raid, two Libyan agents bombed a Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, murdering 270 persons. Initially, Captain Muammar Gaddafi denied responsibility for that terror campaign. Three years later, however, the US opened an inquiry and then revealed that Libya was behind the Lockerbie bombing. By 1992, the UN Security Council passed a series of sanctions against Libya that paralyzed its economy. Unpredictably, in 1999, Col. Muammar Gaddafi surrendered to the United Nation two Libyan intelligence agents, who were suspected for the 1988 terrorist attack. By 2003, Libya admitted responsibility of its agents' behavior and approved to grant \$2.7bn to compensate the leakage for the victims' families and abandoned terrorism. As a result, the UN lifted the punishment

that had been imposed on the country several years earlier (A History of Libya's Ties with the US).

By December 2003, Gaddafi announced overtly that he would renounce Libya's Weapons of Mass Destruction programs. The United States welcomed Gaddafi's announcement and formally suspended its sanctions. In 2004, diplomatic relations between the two states were enhanced, US oil firms were invested again in Libya after more than two decades and Muammar Gaddafi was regarded as a major cooperator in the war against terrorism after 9/11 attacks (Zunes). However, the Libyan unrest of early 2011 marked a turn in the diplomatic ties between Gaddafi and America. Swiftly, Obama severed all the dealings with Libya and passed back the former sanctions and pushed the UN Security Council to penalize the Libyan president Gaddafi for his crimes against humanity.

3.2. International Community Response to the 2011 Libyan Revolution

The International intervention under the chief leadership of the United States, Britain and France that was initiated on 19th March 2011 swerved the Libyan revolution from its natural path. In only a short period, from late February to late March, the United States and Europe overturned a decade of rapprochement attempts to regulate political, commercial and military relations with Captain Muammar Gaddafi and instigated military operations against him. In fact, the participation of the Western leaders in the Libyan Civil War and their neutrality in the Tunisian and Egyptian Uprisings had generated fundamental controversial debate among the international public. When different signals proved the continuation of Gaddafi's brutal attacks against civilians, Western decision makers saw the inevitability and the responsibility to interfere to protect both the opponents and the citizens. However, to put such choice into practice needs major support and collaborative efforts (Bell and Witter 13-14).

In that manner, the intervention in Libya was neither simple nor predictable. Since both regimes in Tunisia and Egypt were toppled in a short period of time, there would be no doubt

that the Libyan revolution would follow the same trajectory. Thus, foreign intervention was artlessly seen unnecessary by the west. Further, different exterior factors pushed for non favoritism to intervene in Libya. Learning the lesson from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Western countries provided neither political nor community support for committing another venture in the future. The second external motive was that the Libyan Spring timing occurred midst the European financial crisis. Despite the foregoing reasons, the Western non-interventionist stance had altered when it was apparent that the Libyan rebels were incapable to put an end to Gaddafi's dictatorial regime (Boeke and Zuijdewijn 23). Moreover, Gaddafi's speech of 22 February 2011 calling to "Cleanse Libya house by house", "ZengaZenga" to throw out the "rats" and "cockroaches" (qtd. in Boeke and Zuijdewijn 23-24) was seen as a threat for a forthcoming crime. This declaration compelled the United Nation to discuss the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and the way it would be implemented (24).

The international community joined together to prevent mass slaughters in Libya under the justification of "the Right to Protect" norm. This concept was formed to assure that atrocities and the protection of civilians is a global community burden. Thence, the United States, the European Union, the Arab League and the African Union condemned Gaddafi's horrific actions on citizens. Firstly, the US and the EU ordered Gaddafi to live his office; however, his hardheadedness pushed them to impose different sanctions on him. Therefore, the United Nations Security Council adopted the 1970 Resolution on the 26th February 2011: an enforcement of an arms blockade, prohibition of mercenaries' cross to Libya, and placement of travel and financial sanctions on Gaddafi and other members of his family (Libya Unrest and US Policy 5-6). While the international alarm about the crisis in Libya had been raised, the 1973 UNSCR was adopted on March 17, 2011 calling for: an immediate cease fire, no fly zone and an authorization to all member states "to take all necessary measures...to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under the threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya,

including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form of any part of Libyan territory” (qtd. in Libya Unrest and US Policy 6). This 1973 decision opened the door for an international military intervention.

3.3. Western Role in the Libyan Conflict

3.3.1. The United Kingdom and France

France and Britain were the first two countries who called for global military campaigns in Libya. The major actor for this intervening mission was the French president Nicolas Sarkozy. From the start of the Libyan rebellion, Sarkozy was the first western leader who opted for Gaddafi’s removal. Similarly, the British Prime Minister David Cameron also publicly declared his certain objection for the Libyan government’s violence and quickly joined to the French initiative after many former perplexities, an action that was both shocking and unusual by many who had recognized him as isolationistic (Mueller 14).

There were in fact reasonable grounds for the Franco-British joining into the Benghazi conflict. After the French reluctant response toward the Tunisian revolution, Nicolas Sarkozy was zealous for an occasion to demonstrate that he still sustained the French human rights’ principles as well as to gather much support in the upcoming presidential election. Likewise, Cameron also found the Libyan events as a golden opportunity to restore his reputation that had been deteriorated in the previous years, the UK debacle in Srebrenica and Rwanda genocides. Additionally, the two European countries viewed the Libyan Civil War as the appropriate case to put their theoretical accords of defense cooperation into practice (Mueller 14).

France was at the foreground of international attempts to condemn the Gaddafi regime. By late February 2011, Sarkozy encouraged the idea of no-fly zone over the Libyan airs and led calls for its necessary implementation. On the 13th of March, France was the first state to fully recognize the National Transitional Council as the provisional government of Libya. This

independent recognition was announced one day before the European Council assembly, which had been organized to take unanimously a decision about the Libyan crisis. This French political action surprised some international partners like the British Prime Minister Cameron. On 19 March, France was the first country to launch an air raid over Libya. Most importantly, the French jet planes were the first to strike the Gaddafi's air forces. Indeed, the 2011 Libyan Spring was an opportunistic event for the French president Nicolas Sarkozy to show to his country and the whole world that he could take the leadership in the Libyan crisis. After the NATO's victory, Sarkozy became very cheery for being called "Sarkozy the Libyan" and "Sarkozy's war" (Lindstrom and Zetterlund 17-22).

Surprisingly, the British Prime Minister David Cameron played largely a proactive role in the international involvement in Libya. He was the one who introduced the no-fly zone plan. After five days of Sarkozy's airstrikes, Cameron informed the British Ministry of Defense to arrange for military air campaigns. Cameron's decisions were isolated even within his own government where he suggested that it was essential for the international community to take all procedures, including the military ones. In fact, Britain met with several abrupt episodes. Sarkozy's quick move of supporting the NTC took the UK by surprise. The British official recognition of the interim governing authority of Libya (NTC) was pronounced only on July 27, 2011. Probably, the Prime Minister Cameron participated in the Libyan conflict in order to show that he was an "international leader" like Toni Blair, the former British Prime Minister (31-37).

3.3.2. The United States

When the so-called Arab Spring reached the Libyan soils, the United States had adopted a guarded approach toward the Libyan unrest, restricting its role in the UNSC mandate. President Barack Obama emphasized that "the purpose is not the military ouster of Muammar Gaddafi but the protection of Libyan civilian" (qtd. in Pothuraju). Further Obama called the

support from other states as the Great Britain and France to drive the Libyan mission while the US had took a “Back-seat role”. In other words, he wanted to “act as part of an international coalition” (qtd. in Pothuraju) rather than taking the sole or the primary command. In effect, there were several reasons behind the US decision to lead from behind in Libya.

Accordingly Obama’s action in Libya was rather slow and cautious. First, he was well conscious of the prior US intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan where America had taken the chief leadership. As a result of the failed policies of the former president George Bush, heavy burden had fallen over Obama’s administration shoulder. Thus, the new US government looked for ways to regain the American reputation in the Arab Muslim world. Obama was therefore obliged not to get embroiled in another open-ended involvement. Nevertheless, he announced that America had the accountability to end what he called as “a looming genocides in the Libyan city of Benghazi” (qtd. in Pothuraju), but with a limited US participation. The second motive for Obama’s reluctance was the US economic disaster. In fact, the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars had cost America thousands of lives and trillions of dollars. However, on March 2011, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments had calculated that “the Libyan no-fly zone could cost \$100 million to \$300 million per week” (qtd. in Pothuraju). This showed that even if the US adapted a restrictive role, the economic burden will remain high too. The third reason that dragged the Obama administration back was the presidential elections of 2012 (Pothuraju).

In the early days of the Libyan conflict, president Obama condemned Gaddafi’s violence attacks, he said:

The United States strongly supports the universal rights of the Libyan people...Like all governments; the Libyan government has a responsibility to refrain from violence, to allow humanitarian assistance to reach those in

need, and to respect the rights of its people. It must be held accountable for its failure to meet those responsibilities, and face the cost of continued violations of human rights.(The White House)

By February 23, President Barack Obama annulled the policy of rapprochement with Libya and strongly sponsored the 1970 UNSCR where he imposed large sanctions against the Gaddafi regime. After that, on 3 March, Obama emphasized that Gaddafi must step down, when he said that “Muammar Gaddafi has lost the legitimacy to lead and he must leave” (The White House).

In an attempt to justify the American intervention, President Obama altered mutual rhetoric, stressing that the US guarantee the rights of all humans as an important part of the US national concern and that America bear full responsibility in directing the world on that important issue. Obama linked the situation of the Libyan people to that of Americans, alerted from Gaddafi’s attacks on defenseless citizens, hospitals and reporters and confirmed the Libyans’ demands for freedom (Vik 120) by saying: “For the first time we finally have hope that nightmare of 40 years will soon be over” (The White House). He likened Benghazi to the city of Charlotte and warned from a forthcoming slaughter when he stated that “We knew that if we wait one more day, Benghazi ,a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world”(CBS News). Thereafter, Obama addressed the Nation:

To brush aside America’s responsibility as a leader and – more profoundly – our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under some circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are. Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States is different. And as president, I refused to wait for the images of the slaughter and mass graves before taking action. (The White House)

Under the pretext “The Responsibility to Protect” norm, President Obama justified the American right to intervene to safeguard the lives of citizens and prevent Gaddafi from perpetuating a massacre against the people of Benghazi. However, these calls for acting in Libya were not universal.

Many US policymakers described the US interference in Libya as unconstitutional since it lacks congressional authorization for the mission. In their eyes, Obama ignored the congressional powers mentioned in the War Powers Act. Much criticism came from Democrats and Republicans as they totally opposed the president’s action to launch war against another Muslim country. Despite the fact that Obama justified the war to be based on humanitarian ground and his insistence that his military operation will be limited in their nature, endurance and area, but to no avail, the congress needed rather convincing rationale. In March, Obama started the operation in Libya without congress’s approval. Consequently, group of members of Congress prosecuted president Obama for his non permitted action and several resolutions were made to block the president from sending military funds to the Libyan war (Vik 124). While Congress objected to Obama’s idea to intervene in Libya, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press poll demonstrated that the vast majority of the US public also objected the US military involvement in Libya (Mueller 14).

Following the UN Security Council authorization, on March 19, 2011, the United States began its military air campaigns in Libya under the name “Operation Odyssey Dawn”. That operation started few hours after the French air attacks. The planning of the initial US offensives was to destroy Gaddafi’s military air defense which would then facilitate the enforcement of no-fly zone and the elimination of Gaddafi’s ground forces. In the first phase of the alliance intervention, the US provided several abilities to increase the support for the NATO and international partners (Bell and Witter 24-27). These abilities were “electronic warfare assistance, aerial refueling, strategic lift capability, personnel recovery and search and

rescue, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support, and an alert strike package” (Miles). With the success of the coalition’s operation, the United States transferred the leadership to NATO in order to limit its role and allowed the United Kingdom and France to take the command (Bell and Witter 26).

3.4. US Limited and Indispensable Role

The US willingness to prevent a humanitarian slaughter and to support the revolutionary orientations declaring democracy in Libya shaped the US decision to get involved in the Libyan case. The US shifted its unilateral policy to multilateral policy under which it collaborated efforts with different regional players and this was implemented in the Libyan security crisis. Although the US military contribution was restricted in time and scope, it was an essential pillar that paved the way to the success of the NATO military intervention in Libya.

Notably under the multilateral view, the Obama administration would not intervene in Libya without lawful endorsement that was embodied in the UNSR of 1973 and in the existence of the NTC, Arab League, and NATO states legal support. Moreover, Obama declared that the UN engagement in Libya was significant for its reliability and that taking no action would harm the UN Security Council reliability. Similarly important, at the early phase of the intervention, the US altered its lead to the NATO lead by playing a limited role during the conflict process. However, this does not mean that the US had no critical role; it participated with different capabilities including military sorties at the first stage as long as refueling capacities and enduring air strike drones at the supporting stage (Tardelli 22).

On the light of the spirited US partnership in conducting the military engagement in Libya, two NATO officials talked about the indispensable US contributions throughout the warlike operation. When international maritime forces were collected to conduct the military attack against targeted Libya, the US was the considerable participant in this global armada. At the

onset hours of the military campaign, the US Florida submarine sent 100 cruise missiles contra Gaddafi airy defense. By doing so, the US opened the door for the next airstrikes. While targeting Gaddafi's forces, NATO depended on American monitoring aircraft "U.S. JSTARS" in tracking the locomotion of the targetable forces. Moreover, the US intelligence wiretap provided NATO with unique information about Gaddafi's military tactics. According to Pentagon compute, the US conducted 5300 missions by the latest of August 1200 of them were strike sorties (Barry).

Interestingly the Libyan crisis had show that the financial constraints and the war tiredness did not hinder the US from interfering in Libya. Regardless of the financial constraints impact on US decision making and the intensity of the intervention, eventually this did not restrain the US from the extended military involvement. Besides, the mission spending was not burdensome. By 31 July 2011, the operational costs reached \$896 million and if the mission continued for the whole year it would be \$2,7 billion. However, when comparing this amount to the \$107 billion designated to war of Afghanistan in 2012, it would be very limited and small charge (Tardelli 22).

The US intervention in Libya received different interpretations and views. Some analysts saw that the US military contribution in Libya was a kind of reciprocate to its European partners for their assistance and support in Afghanistan. Another probable reason that pushed Washington to pick the decision of intervening was that Libya was regarded as a threat that would destabilize the region. The Libyan conflict inflamed trepidations that the country would turn back to sponsor terrorism or that Gaddafi would reopen the mass destruction weapons folder. Moreover, the Lockerbie attack might stick to the Western mind (Lindstrom and Zetterlund 48).

3.5. The NATO Military Operations in Libya

The Military intervention decision was planned and discussed through different steps. On 25th of February 2011, the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the political wing of NATO, convened an assembly to agitate the Libyan crisis; driving different representatives of Foreign Affairs. Thence on 10 and 11 March, their coordinators from Defense organized a meeting that opened the doors for NATO's military interference. Thereafter, after coordinating diversified efforts by international governments, France initiated the "Libya Contact Group" which widely debated how the initial stage of intervention should be. This group consisted of the NATO, UN, EU, Arab League, the Cooperation Council of the Arab Gulf States (CCG), and the Islamic Conference Organization. It was not a matter of just discussing the military involvement but also foreshadowed Libya after the interference. Interestingly, when France took the leadership of this group, it was seeking to hold the command and not to the NAC. Thence the NATO undertook the mission on March 31, 2011 and thus it would conduct the mission without refraining for the reason that its members had programmed for the involvement previously (Boeke and Zuijdewijn 28).

By looking to the NATO military involvement in the Libyan uprising, it almost encountered no objection but rather it was favored by the Arab League and other supporters to perform its actions. Thence the no-fly zone was carried out and arms embargo was implemented to stop violence and enforce Gaddafi to step down. The lack of Gaddafi's supporters and the rareness of the NATO's opposition paved the way to the expedition of the NATO in Libya. Despite the fact that there was no clear impedance against the UN resolution, some countries such as Russia, China, India, Brazil and Germany refrained from voting and exhibited reservations soon after military raids were launched. They condemned the NATO for its interpretation of 1973 resolution and estimated that this resolution had given no authorization to exercise a military intervention (Miller).

On 19 March 2011, NATO conducted a joint coalition of 18 states to solve the ongoing crisis in Libya. The US played a major supportive and key role, logistic support, refueling capacities and other different sorts of warfare needs. In addition, France and the United Kingdom achieved 40% of the sorties and devastated about 1/3 of the total military targets. Further Italy and Greece provided exploration aircrafts and accessed to territorial air bases. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates diffused combatants for warfare operations, and Jordan, Turkey, Spain, Netherland, Sweden and Qatar assisting in the enforcement of the no-fly zone. The different missions led by NATO members had codenames (Daalder and Stavridis 4).

The NATO missions that were adopted by the initial coalition members came to be called “Operation Unified Protector”. Hence the first stage of operations was under the leadership of US called “Operation Odyssey Dawn” operation. Besides other significant participators were France with “Operation Harmattan”, the United Kingdom with “Operation Ellamy” and Canada with “Operation Mobile”. The Operation United Protector composed of airy and maritime constituents, all the members of the alliance participated with both components but Qatar was airy contributor. Besides Qatar was the Arab-Muslim country that sent weapons and combat forces to help oppositions. Furthermore after a short period of the outset of the operations, the US abandoned the mission, disengaged its military aircrafts, and shifted to take a supportive role (Viraand Cordesman48). Thereafter, The NATO continued the intervention process until 31 October 2011, after the collapse of Gaddafi’s regime, when he was captured and executed by Misratan militia-men on October 22, 2011. Totally the foreign military involvement in Libya endured 7 months, 1 week, and 5 days. The 27th October, the UNSC elected to set a limit to the NATO’s mandate by the end of October, in spite of the NTC request that asked for an extend of the “no fly-zone” mission for another year (Schauseil).

The confined role that was performed by some of the NATO members had weakened the multilateralism ideology. The exertions that were exercised by NATO to achieve the purpose of the Security Council Resolution had received no large international participation. From the NATO's twenty-eight members, only fourteen of them contributed to the operation: Belgium, Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the United States. In addition, four non-NATO members contributed to the mission: Sweden, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Thus the Turkey unwillingness, the German absence and the scarceness of new NATO members were prominent. For those members who did not participate, claiming that they lacked air and naval resources. However, despite Germany's war capabilities, it stayed out of the military mission due to its internal regards and that it had no intention to accede in this Libyan war (Bell and Witter 27).

Conclusion

To give a concrete example about the saying “compression generates explosion”, then, the blossomed Arab Spring was the best one to illustrate this. First, when people felt exhausted and their voices were silenced, thus, the preferable solution was to revolt against authorities and this exactly what happened in some Arab countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya. In Tunisia, following Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolation, people saw the inevitability of rebelling and why not toppling the regime too. Actually, this is what happened, after mass protests ended with the flight of President Ben Ali. Subsequently, Egyptians took a similar pathway, blowing out in a large scale of revolution demanding the collapse of Mubarak’s regime; hence, few days of revolution succeeded in bringing down the 3 decades of rule. However, this was not the case in Libya and Syria, the opposition did not pursue the same way of revolt nor did it achieve similar outcomes. In Libya, both sides including the rebels and the government forces were armed which led up to civil war, and only with NATO intervention in Libya, was Muammar Gaddafi toppled. Similarly Syria is still suffering from a catastrophic bloody civil war.

In the wake of the earth-quaking events, the United States found herself in a real dilemma over how to handle that phenomenon without losing its strategic interests. Initially, the Obama administration’s attitude to the Arab Spring was rather cautious and ambivalent. The Tunisian Jasmine revolution took place with no clear US role, in other words, the United States was not part of that tragic story since it had no strategic values in Tunisia. However, the pharaohs and pyramids country, Egypt, was a different case for the US. In fact, Egypt is considered as a very strategic and indispensable country for the US. Thus, President Barack Obama supported the Egyptian president until that support became indefensible. American policy towards Egypt was fairly inconsistent since the US had struggled to cooperate with whoever was in power in order to continue its initiative policies in the region.

The civil wars in Libya and Syria were a second opportunity for the United States to revive its failed policies, exclude its foes in the region and to regain its reputation around the Muslim world. However, the US developed new approach towards the Middle Eastern and North African regions which was “Leading from behind” far away from the old approach which was “Boots on the ground”. In Libya, the US helped and supported military intervention by NATO forces, which eventually led to the end of the unrest and the assassination of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi at the hands of his people. In Syria, the US decision to involve militarily was rejected. Although, the UNSC rejected NATO intervention in Syria due to Russia and China’s vetoes, the US was involved in the logistic assistance to the Syrian rebels to fight the Assad regime.

Humanitarian considerations, protecting human rights, responsibility to protect were different explanations of the international engagement in countries that were affected by chaos and disturbance. The NATO and US military intervention in Libya makes matters worse since it increased the numbers of armed rebels, fueling the intensity of the civil war, pushing extremists, and instead of protecting civilians it harmed them most. The lesson that should be learned from Libya is that when a state is experiencing an internal conflict, the international community should desist from providing a military involvement. The Libyan case shows how innocent people pay for the wrong international decision that was taken under the name of democracy.

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