

Turkey Involvement in Libyan Civil War Under the Government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan 2019-2020

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ABSTRACT

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the world, the internal conflict in Libya has escalated as the country's rival powers reject the UN's call for a 'global ceasefire'. Troops loyal to Khalifa Haftar are stepping up attacks on the country's cities. To counter the attacks of Khalifa Haftar who led the Libyan National Army (LNA), Turkey, as the main supporter of the Government of National Accord (GNA), began deploying its military to areas controlled by the LNA. This study tries to explain Turkey's involvement in the Libyan internal conflict in 2019-2020. The theoretical approach in this study uses a foreign policy approach that explains the role of various elements in shaping a country's foreign policy. The results found in this paper indicate that the Turkish Government decided its involvement in the internal Libyan conflict in 2019-2020 based on the domestic political conditions controlled by the AKP, the interests of creating stability and securing Turkey's economy in Libya, and Turkey's ambition to expand its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. In addition, this study opens a wide space as a form of better development in the future.

Keywords: *Turkey, Libyan Conflict, Foreign Policy, GNA, LNA.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Turkey's geographical position which borders the continents of Asia and Europe makes it easy to mobilize and interact with countries in Europe and Asia. Apart from being close to the two continents, Turkey is also geographically connected to the African continent through the Eastern Mediterranean basin. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, countries in the African region that used to be part of its territory have become independent countries. The end of the Turkish caliphate system marked a change in the form of the state into a republic that adopted a secular-democratic system as in the West during the time of Kemal Ataturk. Kemal's Turkish secularism began to change when the AKP party came to power in 2002. During the AKP, Turkey's foreign policy was also different from the period of Kemal's leadership. The first Turkish leadership, led by Ataturk, laid the groundwork for Turkey's foreign policy. Ataturk takes the lead in envisioning a lovely, peaceful future world [1].

Under the "Strategic Depth Doctrine" as a combination of real politics and ideology developed by Former PM Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey has led Turkey as an influential actor in the region by taking advantage of the development of its geocultural and geopolitical aspects. Today, Turkey under the reign of Recep Tayyip Erdogan is shaping foreign policy by drawing on history under the Ottoman Empire. Along with political unrest in the Arab world after the Arab Spring, Turkey's policies began to be confrontational in dealing with issues in neighboring countries, namely the Middle East and North Africa, which cannot be separated from conflict [2].

Turkey is very concerned about the Arab Spring events that occurred in the North African region. Starting from Tunisia, the Arab Spring spread to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Libya. Economic and political instability in the Arab Spring countries has become the gateway to foreign intervention or toppling the regime in power in those countries, as happened in Egypt with the overthrow of President Morsi [3].

In Libya itself, after the death of the former Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, who had been in authoritarian rule for 40 years in the Arab Spring, it did not automatically lead to changes for the better. Coupled with rampant corruption and greed committed by the government, 52.8% of oil as the country's main income does not flow to state development projects, causing a crisis of people's trust in the government regime. Peak, February 15, 2011 hundreds of people in Libya held a massive demonstration in several cities demanding the fall of Gaddafi. Finally, the Gaddafi regime stepped down, leaving society fragmented into rival factions. Finally, during the 2012-2013 Libyan political transition, there was a military coup to overthrow the incumbent government. The General National Congress (GNC) which took control of Libya based on the 2012 elections was attacked by the Libyan National Army (LNA) commanded by Khalifa Haftar in 2014.

For this reason, the Government of National Accord (GNA) was formed and declared on 17 December 2015 as an internationally recognized interim government under the UN initiative as a result of the international conference on Libya in Skhirat, Morocco with Fazez Al Sarraj as its leader. This is allegedly an effort by the United Nations to end the civil war that occurred after the overthrow of Gaddafi [4]. The existence of the GNA also failed to solve the problem and instead worsened the situation with high-level conflicts in the government. This conflict has also attracted the involvement of other actors such as the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Russia and France who have interests in Libya [5].

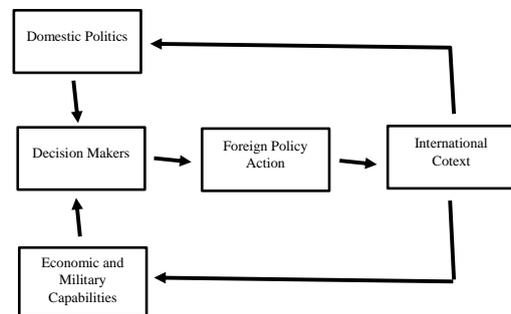
In April 2019, Khalifa Haftar's (LNA) troops carried out ground and air attacks to seize the government of Tripoli [6] which was allegedly supported by Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The GNA, which has been supported by Qatar, Britain, the United States, Algeria, and Italy since its inception, has surprisingly not received significant military assistance from its allies for this attack [7]. As a result, 264 people died, including 21 civilians, 1,266 people were injured and 32,000 people were displaced from April 4 to April 25, 2019. The toll continued to grow as the fighting entered its third month, 1,000 people were killed including civilians and 5000 others were injured. Not only that, the fighting has displaced 100,000 people since this event rolled from April to June [8].

Turkey, which has currently chosen neutrality over the Libyan conflict even when NATO members intervened in Libya in the Arab Spring revolution, finally got involved and emerged as one of the regional actors who played a big role in the Libyan conflict by providing open support since May 2019 to the GNA Al Sarraj based in Tripoli [9]. Turkey deployed military support in Libya in January 2020 based on a military

and security coordination agreement and maritime agreement with the UN-recognized government of PM Fayeze al Sarraj (GNA) in Libya. Turkish assistance contributed to changing the course of the battle and the success of the GNA forces in expelling LNA troops from the West Coast cities of Tripoli, Al Watiya airbase, and Tarhuna City. This incident became the turning point of Turkey's involvement in the Libyan civil war [10].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To be able to explain the policies taken by the Turkish government in the Libyan conflict, in this study, the researchers utilized the theoretical framework of William D. Coplin's Foreign Policy Making, as this theory is stated in his book "Introduction to International Politics". The theory contains an explanation of how the foreign policy-making process is formulated and the things that influence the foreign policy-making of a country. William D. Coplin describes the theory of Foreign Policy Making in a simple model that can provide an understanding and explanation of the state policy-making process, in this case, the policy is formed on three important considerations, namely: first related to domestic political conditions, secondly economic and military capabilities and the third is the international context. The following is an overview of the theoretical model of Foreign Policy Making:



The domestic political situation of a country can influence the preparation of domestic politics. Differences in the adopted system, such as autocratic or democratic and open or closed political systems, will greatly affect the formulation of the country's foreign policy [11]. This is inseparable from the relationship between foreign policy-making and domestic actors who seek to influence their foreign policy behavior. These actors who influence policy or decision-making are referred to as policy influencers. Meanwhile, the influence of system policy refers to the link that exists between domestic political actors and international decision-makers. William D. Coplin also stated that there is reciprocity between decision-makers and policy influencers in the policy influence system.

The main factor in determining the foreign policy of a country is the condition of domestic politics, domestic politics can refer to the national interest of the country or the behavior of a country that wants to be implemented in foreign policy. William D Coplin divides four types of policy influencers who can influence domestic politics, which are as follows:

1. Bureaucratic influencers: are parties in the form of individuals or organizations that play a role in executive agencies in government that assist decision-makers in formulating and implementing a policy.
2. Partisan influencers: in this regard, political parties in a country contribute to the decision-making process that arises because politics within the party can bridge the interests between the people and their government.
3. Interest influencer: consists of a group of people who have the same interest, the national interest of a country can be in the form of political or economic motives.
4. Mass influencer: mass communication encourages a lot of public opinion or society and can mobilize through mass media.

Inspired by the behavior of European kings in the Middle Ages, William D. Coplin analyzes that economic and military factors can influence the direction of decision making. These two variables, according to Coplin, became the main capital of European countries to colonize Europe and Asia. In this regard, Coplin sees economic and military capabilities as influencing factors in the foreign policy-making process, despite the long debate over which is more important between economic and military capabilities. Strong economic and military capabilities can build certain countries to be more active in the international political scene. Specifically, in the military field, Coplin divides three main criteria, namely those related to troops, the level of training, and the nature of military equipment [11]. By referring to these three criteria, foreign decision-makers can see how effective they are. For this reason, the economic and military capabilities of a country can affect its bargaining position in other countries and thus affect the determination of the attitude of other countries towards a country's foreign policy. Therefore, the better the economy and military of a country, the easier it will be to balance national interests with their capabilities.

The international context relates to the position of relations with other countries in the international system. In his book, William D. Coplin states that there are three basic elements in explaining the impact of the

international context on a country's foreign policy. These three things are geographical, economic, and political contexts [11]. A large area is one of the national strengths of a nation, as a country that has a wider area creates a tendency to intervene in a narrower country. For example, Iraq's intervention in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive and qualitative analysis methods were employed in this study to answer the research questions. The data used in this study were secondary data obtained from literature, both books and media including online or internet research such as articles, journals, websites, news, or reports. After collecting data from relevant books or online sources, the data were used as information to assist the researchers in conducting this study.

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1. Arab Spring and Libya

The Arab Spring is a large-scale geopolitical and social mobilization event that has shaped politics in the post-Cold War Middle East. This incident occurred in December 2010, when the Tunisian working class and civilians and organizations gathered after the self-immolation of a street vendor who had been suppressed by Tunisian police forces. The strong social mobilization and the unity of the Tunisian people forced the Tunisian President to resign after three weeks of the triggering event. Inspired by this success, similar mobilizations took place in various countries in the Middle East including Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other regions [12].

In the case of Libya, demonstrations began on February 15, 2011, which were triggered by the detention of a lawyer who criticized the government. This movement is not only motivated by freedom issues but also the aftermath of economic problems. This demonstration event was later responded to by repressive actions taken by Gaddafi against the protesters using military force [13] which then showed that the political crisis would not end in a peaceful democratic transition. Gaddafi who chose to use repressive measures by using military force and cutting off state lines of communication then made the situation even tenser by transforming from demonstrations and community mobilization into armed conflict and rebellion.

The conflict that shackles Libya has divided society into two camps, namely the opposition camp represented by the National Transition Council (NTC) and the loyalist camp supporting Gaddafi. The two camps have opposing interests, because the NTC, led by the former Minister of

Justice, Mustafa Abdel Jalil, wants Gaddafi to step down from his position as head of state. Meanwhile, from the loyalist side, Gaddafi supporters want Gaddafi's power to continue to swing as it should [14]. These two camps were also involved in mutual attacks, Gaddafi felt threatened then threatened that the actions taken by the opposition along with the Libyan people were a form of rebellion that demanded he abdicated by force and would take firm action against this. This action was then realized by a repressive approach in dealing with the political crisis that occurred. Mercenaries from various countries such as Niger, North Korea, and Chad were also taken to the streets to bombard the dissident masses [13].

As a result, many people died from political conflicts involving both parties. A total of 139 civilians were killed and a total of 111 Libyan soldiers were killed in this incident. This extraordinary series of events also attracted regional and international attention, including the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC states and warns that events involving the Gaddafi regime and its supporters against the community indicate acts of crimes against humanity following the International Federation for Human Rights which sees the conflict in Libya as a form of crimes against humanity.

In response to this, regional and international organizations urged Gaddafi to stop these atrocities against humanity. The Arab League even announced to suspend Libya's membership until the demands of democracy echoed by the Libyan people can be met. Nevertheless, regional actors such as the African Union take a cautious stance on their statements about the possibility of foreign intervention in the Libyan conflict. For them, foreign military intervention in any form is not justified and is a firm rejection. However, they gradually changed their attitude along with the number of civilian victims [15].

The UN Security Council finally convened a session regarding the Libyan political crisis [16]. The trial was conducted 2 times, the first session on February 26, the UN Security Council resulted in UN Security Council Resolution No. S/RES/1970. The resolution given by the UN did not go well, because Gaddafi was still aggressively carrying out military attacks on demonstrators even through airstrikes.

The UN Security Council held a second session as an effort to anticipate the human rights violations that shackled Libya on March 17, 2011, and resulted in UN Security Council Resolution No. R/RES/1973. The United Nations authorizes countries that are members of the United Nations to take the necessary measures to protect Libyan civilians from attacks by the Gaddafi regime both regionally and internationally. The

resolution attracted the attention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to carry out Human Intervention in order to achieve security and peace in the world, especially for countries in conflict and unable to resolve it internally [17].

In this Operation Unified Protector was carried out by NATO as a peacekeeping measure, by taking full control of Libyan military operations and carrying out a no-flying zone to save the Libyan people from the threat of military attacks that might occur. The United States on March 19, 2011, as part of a NATO member, made a military operation in support of Operation Unified Protector, named Operation Odyssey Down. Noted, in the first week, NATO has destroyed 30% of the Libyan Air Force through airstrikes, including combat vehicles and anti-aircraft radar. In addition, NATO also destroyed 500 tanks, more than 700 ammunition depots, and 100 sites that Gaddafi used to command his troops (BBC, 2011). The death of Gaddafi on October 20, 2011, became the endpoint of the cessation of the civil conflict in Libya. After the death of Gaddafi, the wheels of the Libyan government were taken over by the National Transition Council (NTC) as the interim government of Libya.

4.2. The Libyan Conflict After Gaddafi and the Involvement of External Parties

After the 2011 revolution, the General National Council or National Transition Council (NTC) became the temporary authority in Libya. The UN Security Council also decided to stop the adoption of Resolution 1973 which was enforced, this ended the NATO-led intervention on Libya [18]. Shortly thereafter, the opposition appointed the National Transition Council (NTC) as Libya's representative and at its next meeting, the opposition considered forming an interim government through elections.

In the elections held in June 2012, the General National Congress (GNC) was elected to represent the Libyan people. This election was also the first free election since 1951. The GNC, which replaced the NTC on August 8, had the task of drafting a new Libyan constitution. When President Mohamed Yousef el Magaraf was in charge, Mustafa Abu Shagur was elected Prime Minister. However, Shagur failed to get parliamentary approval of his cabinet and a coup ensued. When the new Prime Minister of Libya, Ahmed Maiteeq took office, the main issue of Libya was discussed which was related to internal security. The issue that became the main focus was that the former general, Khalifa Haftar, received support from the military and militia based in Tobruk as an implication of the poor management of local militias, resulting in armed conflict. The conflict between the ruler (GNC) against the rebellion of Khalifa Haftar

then led to the holding of elections. In elections held in May 2014, the House of Representatives (HoR) was declared the winner. However, the GNC opposed the transfer of power, until finally the internal situation in Libya was divided into 2 camps, the Tripoli-based GNC and Tobruk-based HoR [19].

Looking at the political conditions that are divided into two political camps, the United Nations has tried to unite Libyan politics since September 2014 and after negotiations between the two camps, on December 17, 2015, the "Libya Political Agreement" was signed. In the agreement that was formed, it was stated that a new government would be formed which was initiated by the United Nations. This new government is the Government of National Accord (GNA). With Resolution 2259 the UNSC declared the GNA as the only legitimate representative of Libya and received international recognition [20].

On 31 December 2015, the Libyan House of Representatives (HoR) declared its support for the Libyan Political Agreement and recognized the GNA. In 2016, the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), Fayeze al Sarraj as its Prime Minister was recognized by the Libyan Presidential Council (LPC) and then moved to Tripoli on 30 March 2016. However, the two different power centers located in Libya are the GNA and the House of Representatives. This conflict then continued despite efforts to be mediated by various parties such as the United Nations. The culmination, then, was a major conflict where there was an aggressive effort made by Haftar's troops by besieging Tripoli in 2019 which resulted in 32 people being killed, 62 injured, and 2,800 residents being displaced [21].

In June 2019, Haftar's (LNA) attack on Tripoli was halted following the situation on the ground that forced these troops to leave Tarhouna and return to Jufra. Turkey's support for the GNA al Sarraj has gradually been able to restore areas that the LNA had previously controlled. Along with Turkey's involvement in Libya, UN ceasefire and dialogue efforts have intensified due to tensions in the Libyan conflict field [9]. This situation refers to the holding of the Berlin Conference on January 18, 2020. A ceasefire occurred in Sirte and Jufra on August 21, 2020, this event was aimed at achieving demilitarization in Sirte and Jufra as areas that often experience intense clashes between GNA and LNA troops. This ceasefire could not be fully implemented in line with external support for Khalifa Haftar (LNA).

Khalifa Haftar's (LNA) year-long offensive against the internationally recognized government in Tripoli (GNA) ended on October 23, 2020. Turkey's military assistance to the GNA was crucial in turning the situation around on the ground. Haftar's troops and

Russian mercenaries have now withdrawn from western Libya. The end of this battle relieved European countries about the potential fall of the capital city. This is closely related to Libya as a gateway for migration to European countries. Therefore, Libya plays a role in the stability of European countries regarding its energy, migration, and geopolitical interests [17].

Currently, Libya is starting to clean up its internal affairs after the conflict ended in 2020. On March 10, 2021, the House of Representatives (HoR) officially approved the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) led by Mohamed al Menfi as chairman of the Presidential Council and Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh as Prime Minister intending to unite the GNA government with HoR in Tobruk [22]. Finally, in May 2021, Libyan Foreign Minister, Najla Mangoush in a joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, stated that Turkey would comply with UN resolutions and would withdraw Turkish troops and mercenaries from Libya under the military agreement of the two countries on the mandate. Turkey's one-year military deployment in Libya.

4.3. Analysis of Turkey's Involvement in the Libyan Internal Conflict

Haftar's attack on Tripoli in April 2019, pushed Turkey's military involvement to the center stage of the conflict. During the offensive mission, Haftar's forces (LNA) were reinforced by indirect and covert assistance from Moscow. About 2000 Russian mercenaries from the notorious Wagner Group were deployed to reinforce the LNA forces. This assistance, together with the drones and air defense systems provided by the UAE, allowed Haftar's LNA to control several strategic areas in western Libya and was able to jeopardize the GNA's defenses in Tripoli [23].

In contrast to the involvement of other countries, Turkey has openly assisted al Sarraj's GNA troops. At the end of 2019, Erdogan, the President of Turkey was very vocal in declaring his involvement in the Libyan conflict and stated that if Fayeze al Sarraj, Prime Minister of the GNA invited and asked Turkey for help in the conflict, Turkey would accept the invitation. An invitation to the GNA government's assistance also came to Turkey. Erdogan announced that Libya had invited Turkey to assist the GNA and continued to sign maritime agreements and military cooperation between the two countries. Erdogan added that Turkey has had a long history of good economic and military performance and that the administration is determined to maintain that prestige [24].

4.3.1. Domestic Factors

Since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, Turkey has developed close ties with Muslim countries around the world. Under the “Strategic Depth Doctrine” otherwise known as Neo-Ottomanism which combines real politics with the ideology developed by former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey aims to become an influential actor in the region by leveraging its geocultural and geopolitical assets. The core of Ahmet Davutoglu's concept of Strategic Depth is built on the premise that a nation's influence on the international scene is based on its deep historical influence and geographic location [25]

As in this case, Turkey's geostrategic location includes several regions such as North Africa, West Asia, the Balkans, Europe, and Central Asia. Likewise, based on historical heritage, Turkey emerged as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire which gave this country a cultural and historical similarity with most of its neighbors, especially those which had been the domination of the Ottoman Empire in the past.

The emergence of the AKP led by Erdogan marked the end of his secular Kemalist era. Under the AKP and Erdogan, Turkey began to shape a foreign policy that drew a shadowy history of the Ottoman Empire. Responding to the phenomenon of political unrest that spread in Arab countries during the 2011 Arab Spring, Turkey took a confrontational policy in dealing with and dealing with neighboring countries in the Middle East region. At the same time, Erdogan has an Islamic political lineage due to his past relationship with Erbakan. It is because of this that Erdogan's political lineage has become part of the Islamic political movement in Turkey and his proximity to the Muslim Brotherhood has had a significant impact on Turkey's foreign policy approach. Turkey's increasing proximity to Muslim countries and the Islamic world and its rift with the West and Israel under the domination of the AKP demonstrates the party's Neo-Ottomanism approach in the direction of its foreign policy orientation [17].

The role of Neo-Ottomanism ideology in Erdogan's AKP body was contained in Turkey's foreign policy which became more visible when the Arab Spring occurred in 2011. In the case of Libya, Turkey's foreign policy after the 2011 Libyan political conflict was marked by the ambition and ideology of Erdogan's Neo-Ottomanism. Turkey takes a very cautious approach because the events of the Libyan political crisis in the Gaddafi regime have spread throughout the country. The implementation of the no-fly zone initiated by NATO, the West, the Organization of the

Islamic Conference (OIC), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab League did not receive support from Turkey. But when the UN Security Council issued a mandate regarding the no-fly zone, Turkey had no other choice but to follow suit. Turkey's weak position against the Gaddafi regime apart from the crimes committed by his regime is related to the \$15-billion-contract embedded in Libya. Accordingly, this contract will be threatened and even fall apart when Turkey fights Gaddafi, who incidentally is his business partner.

In addition, what made Turkey involved in Libya's internal conflict was the legacy of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. The presence of more than one million Turks of Ottoman Empire descent on Libya. People from Turkey who are in the Libyan region are known as "Kuloglu Turks or Kouloghis", descendants of the blood of North African women with the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire [26]. Libyan Turks who were ideologically aligned with Turkey's position in support of elements linked to the Muslim Brotherhood were attacked by Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) forces. Despite being a heterogeneous and ideologically fragmented group, the Kuloglu Turks in 2015 formed the Libyan Koroglu Association to affirm their distinct identity and revive their past Ottoman heritage.

Kuloglu Turks residing in the Libyan region inhabit the cities of Benghazi, Derna, Misrata, Tripoli, and Zawiya. Under Gaddafi's rule, the city of Misrata was treated as a marginalized province and the Turk was exiled from a high position. Thus, most of them are involved in the real estate sector, trade, repair, construction, trucking, and small-scale industry. When the 2011 uprising broke out, the city of Misrata became a stronghold and the Turkic-Libyans played a prominent role in the war. The existence of people of Turkic-Libyan descent pushed Turkey into the realm of the Libyan conflict. While justifying Turkey's decision to send troops to Libya, President Erdogan has often appealed against the deep social and historical relationship between Turkey and Libya. In fact, on one occasion Erdoan once stated:

“Our only goal is to protect the future rights of us and our brother. Besides the plot to kill our Arab brothers O Haftar, there are also more than a million Kuloglu Turkic descendants living there.” (Daily Sabah, 2020).

With this, Turkey calls its interference in Libya's internal conflict a moral obligation to protect the Turkish diaspora in that country. Departing from this, Turkey can gain a moral advantage over regional and international players who are also involved in Libya's internal conflict. The Libyan government (GNA) on

December 19, 2019, officially asked Turkey's support to repel LNA troops or the Libyan National Army, led by Khalifa Haftar, who tried to seize the capital Tripoli. In this regard, the Turkish Parliament approved the sending of troops and aid to the GNA al Sarraj on January 2, 2020. With 325 votes in favor and 184 votes against [27]. The AKP, which controls parliament, was able to pass laws without any opposition party opposing it.

The Turkish Parliament, precisely on January 2, 2020, approved the deployment of Turkish troops to Libya. Based on a vote in parliament, a one-year mandate was established for Turkish troops to transfer weapons, aircraft, and military vehicles to support al Sarraj's GNA government in Tripoli. Gradually Turkey sent troops to Libya. In this position, it is evident that the AKP which controls parliament greatly determines the direction of Turkey's policy stance towards other countries, in this context it is related to Turkey's involvement in the Libyan internal conflict.

4.3.2. *Economic and Military Factors*

Turkey changed its economic development strategy from import substitution to export-driven economic growth in the 1980s. This strategic maneuver then has a significant impact on Turkey's foreign policy, because in this context Turkey is actively promoting the use of markets that have never been touched before by forging new partnerships with other countries in the world. The impetus of the economic strategic maneuver cannot be separated from Turkey's economic interests. Along with the AKP's rule in Turkish politics since 2002, Turkey's policy has expanded not only to economic issues but also to develop other aspects such as culture, security, and politics in establishing relations with other countries, especially for countries that have historical ties to Turkey in the past. then. This point of view is aimed at making Turkey a regional power that is considered by adopting a soft power approach in its foreign policy [28].

Conditions of economic growth will determine Turkey's foreign policy. Starting in 2018, Turkey's economic growth experienced a recession, and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the value of the Lira continued to fall. Turkey also looks at the potential for cooperation with other countries that can increase Turkey's economic growth, one of which is Libya. Moreover, one of the countries targeted by Turkey in launching its economic partnership in the 1980s was Libya. Since that year, Turkish contractors have been present in Libya to cooperate in the field of development, including pipelines, public and private facilities, various ports, and others. When the Arab

Spring hit Libya in 2011, Turkey evacuated as many as 20,000 workers and left assets from construction works estimated to be worth more than \$25 billion [29]. This strong economic relationship between the two countries has become a consideration for Turkey's cautious attitude in responding to the anti-Gaddafi demonstrations in 2011.

Table 1 Turkey Export-Import to/from Libya 2002-2019

Year	Import (US\$ Thousand)	Export (US\$ Thousand)
2002	754,042	163,081
2003	1,072,548	254,741
2004	1,514,125	337,204
2005	1,989,269	384,167
2006	2,297,351	489,261
2007	399,720	643,150
2008	336,325	1,074,288
2009	357,417	1,795,117
2010	425,652	1,932,370
2011	139,763	747,629
2012	416,152	2,139,440
2013	303,957	2,753,096
2014	243,756	2,059,898
2015	195,796	1,420,087
2016	161,021	906,107
2017	247,965	880,729
2018	367,010	1,498,326
2019	474,329	1,960,500

Source: (International Trade Center, 2021)

As shown in the table, in 2019 even though the Libyan civil war was ongoing, economic relations between the two countries were still visible. Turkey exports to Libya \$1.96 billion and imports \$473.3 million worth of goods with a trading volume of \$2.4 billion which is slightly more than in 2010 before the overthrow of Gaddafi [30]. Judging from this, Libya occupies an important place in Turkey's economic reach. Furthermore, Turkey signed a compensation agreement worth \$2.7 billion with the GNA for work carried out by Turkish contractors in Libya before the events of the 2011 civil war in which Turkey's economic business in

Libya stalled as a result. Such efforts are made. Therefore, Turkish businesses which had stalled during the 2011 conflict can resume operations. Details of the deal will include \$1 billion in warranties, \$500 million for damage to machinery and equipment, and \$1.2 billion in outstanding debt [10].

Despite the ongoing turmoil in Libya, Turkey-Libya trade remains strong, and the two nations have just inked new contracts involving collaboration in housing, commercial centers, and electricity projects in Libya. In 2019, the Independent Industrialist and Businessmen Association of Turkey (MUSIAD) established a presence in Libya. They have expressed their intention of increasing Turkish exports to Libya to \$10 billion from \$1.49 billion in 2018 [31]. Markets and strengthening economic relations with Libya are very important for Turkey because Libya is a gateway for Turkey's geopolitical and economic interests in the African region.

Turkey's military is currently ranked as the 11th strongest in the world, this ranking is up from 14th in 2016 [32]. Concerning Turkey's defense and military, both were formed due to the changing security landscape of Turkey after the Arab Spring and to protect its national security interests. In addition, to make Turkey a firm regional and international player, Turkey is increasingly paying attention to international and regional issues. Under Erdogan's leadership, the Turkish military is armed with epics, such as the S-400s from Russia, and is aggressively developing short and long-range surface to air missile systems [33].

Since May 2019, Turkey has supplied air cover, military advisers, armored vehicles, and armed drones to the GNA. This move by Turkey was effective in helping the GNA withstand the attacks of Haftar's LNA who wanted to seize the capital Tripoli from the GNA. This Turkish support drew a reaction from Haftar until in 2019 Haftar banned Turkish flights originating from Libya to Turkey and ordered LNA troops to target and repel Turkish ships and interests in the country.

Nonetheless, Turkish interference in Libya is still a good offer for Erdogan, as it gives Turkey an important role in shaping the future of Libya according to its interests. In the Libyan conflict, Turkey understands that its economic interests will be protected as long as al Sarraj's GNA side can withstand the attacks of Haftar's LNA. Therefore, the stability of Libya is an important issue for Turkey, especially since the Turkish military should be taken into account and enter the ranks of the country with the strongest military. Moreover, Turkey's participation in the Libyan conflict does not prove a financial burden for

Ankara, as the GNA pours money into Turkey in return for the advisory and military support it has received. Those closest to Erdogan also reaped the benefits of the event, such as Erdogan's son-in-law, Selcuk Bayraktar who supplied the Bayraktar TB2 drones to Libya and Adnan Tanriverdi, a former adviser to President Erdogan, owner of the private security company SADAT which supplies military advisors and fighters to Libya [34].

4.3.3. International Context Factor

The development of the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean greatly influenced Turkey's policy towards Libya. The US geological survey has determined the value of natural gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean at \$700 billion. At this time, the urgent challenge for Turkey's foreign policy stems from the friendly ties or cooperation between Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, and Italy which Turkey considers to be against its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean region. In 2019, these countries together with Jordan formed the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EastMed) to turn the region into a major source of gas exports to the European region, which is already trying to reduce its energy needs on Russian gas [35]. To that end, under this strategy in January 2020, Israel, Cyprus and Greece signed an agreement to build a 1,9000 km long underwater gas pipeline. The idea for the construction of this pipeline is aimed at connecting gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean region with the European market through Italy and Greece. Several countries have expressed interest in the gas pipeline development proposal, including the US and France. The two countries expressed interest in joining the EastMed forum at the meeting held in Cairo in January 2020 [36].

In this position, Turkey objected to the EastMed gas pipeline project. The Turkish government views that the EastMed gas forum is politically motivated to remove Turkey from the Eastern Mediterranean energy reserves. As in the previous discussion, in recent times Turkey's approach to foreign policy was driven ideologically under Erdogan and the AKP, making this country lose many friends in the Mediterranean region. For example, Erdogan's confrontational approach has strained Turkey's relations with Israel and Egypt. Bad relations with Egypt cannot be separated from the incident when Erdogan expressed his full support for Mohammed Morsi, the former President of Egypt in his dispute with the army, especially because of Morsi's relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood. Erdogan's criticism of the military coup that overthrew Morsi, was seen by Cairo generals as a form of interference in Egypt's domestic affairs and should not be done.

After Morsi's death in 2019, Erdogan accused the Egyptian government of killing this former president [37].

In addition, concerning Israel, the relationship between Turkey and this country has not improved since the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010, at which time, the Israeli military killed 10 Turkish activists on a ship carrying aid to Gaza in an attempt to break the blockade imposed by Israel. enforced by Israel. In 2018, Turkey-Israel relations experienced a diplomatic crisis when the Israeli army responded to protests against the US decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, killing at least 55 Palestinians and injuring 2,700 others. As in this case, Turkey is known as one of the Muslim countries that supports Palestine over Israel's atrocities. In response to this incident, Turkey withdrew its ambassador from Israel, and so did Israel [38] Greece, as a member of the EastMed gas pipeline forum, cannot be separated from its bad relationship with Turkey, this relationship is related to the maritime boundary dispute between the two countries in the Aegean Sea. The two countries were even on the verge of war over the Aegean Sea conflict in 1996. Unlike Greece, Turkey is not a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea or UNCLOS. In this case, UNCLOS is an agreement that allows countries to limit their EEZ bound to the shelf. continental shelf up to 200 nautical miles from the coastline. This makes it possible for countries to claim maritime boundaries up to 12 nautical miles from their coasts. However, Turkey argues that any action taken by Greece to impose maritime areas beyond 6 nautical miles is seen as an act of war for Turkey [17]. Because the imposition of maritime claims up to 12 miles by Greece will make 71.5% of the Aegean waters under the jurisdiction of Greece along with almost all of its islands and this is what Turkey is against, Greece will control the Aegean waters.

Turkey's objections to the EastMed pipeline project also relate to the presence of its long-term adversary Cyprus at the forum and the exclusion of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus from the process. Since 1974, the island of Cyprus has been divided into the internationally recognized Greek-dominated Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is recognized only by the Turkish government. In 1974 Turkish troops seized the northern part of the then-undivided island of Cyprus after a coup led by a faction supporting the country's unity with Greece. Turkey still maintains 40,000 troops in Northern Cyprus. Negotiations to unify the islands under a single federation escalated in 2015. However, these attempts failed [39]. This is why the

Turkish government is questioning the legality of the Republic of Cyprus' claim to start drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean natural gas field on Cyprus' southern coast, Aphrodite, without giving Turkish Cypriots an equal share in the financial benefits arising from these natural gas resources.

Turkey's increasing isolation in the Eastern Mediterranean region has prompted Turkey to play the role of destroyer of the planned EastMed pipeline project. In 2017, Greek Cypriots granted licenses to three companies including Italy's ENI, Exxon Mobil, and France's Total Win to start drilling operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. This has drawn criticism from Turkey, and Turkey has blocked an attempt by Italy's ENI to drill gas on the coast of Cyprus with the Turkish Navy. Furthermore, in 2019 Turkey demonstrated its strength by sending four drilling vessels to enter the Eastern Mediterranean region off the coast of the Republic of Cyprus, this event also triggered an increase in tension in the area [35].

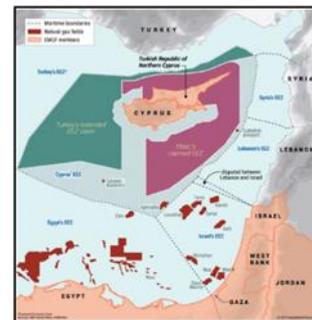


Figure 1 Energy Dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean (Geopolitical Futures, 2021)

Turkey's aggressive approach to the Eastern Mediterranean has alienated the country from its western allies including the European Union and the US. In July 2019, the EU responded to the deployment of a Turkish drilling vessel in the Eastern Mediterranean through sanctions. These sanctions include a reduction in the pre-opt funding available to Turkey as part of its bid to join the European Union. At the same time, still in July 2019, the US Congress decided to end the 32-year arms embargo on Cyprus. The US side also promised to provide military training to Cyprus worth USD 2 million. The lifting of the embargo and US military training applies on the condition that Cyprus will not allow Russia to use its ports. Interestingly, the terms proposed by the US contradict the agreement that Cyprus and Russia signed in 2015, in which it was stated that Cyprus gave Russian ships access to dock in Cyprus ports. The steps taken by the US have increased the Turkish government's anxiety about the sustainability of Northern Cyprus, therefore Turkey is looking for an alternative solution by combining the

tension conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean with the Libyan civil conflict.



Figure 2 Turkish Maritime Deal with GNA (Petroleum Economist, 2021)

In order to end Turkey's increasing isolation and to limit the development of the EastMed gas pipeline and at the same time gain more influence in the Mediterranean region, Turkey signed a maritime and military agreement with the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya on 27 November 2019. The maritime relations between Turkey and Libya, from the coast of Turkey in the north to Libya in the south. The northern area claimed by Turkey in this treaty passes through several Greek islands, mainly the island of Crete and parts of the EEZ of Cyprus [40]. More importantly, the maritime agreement between the two countries was able to block the planned EastMed gas pipeline route.

This is thus more frustrating than the countries involved in the EastMed gas pipeline forum. Therefore, Turkey's intervention in Libya's internal conflict flows from the ambition to have a government in Libya that can support its claim to the Eastern Mediterranean's abundant energy reserves. By supporting the GNA, President Erdogan aims to make the maritime agreement with Libya permanent in international affairs and at the same time, by using an aggressive approach in the Libyan and Eastern Mediterranean conflicts, Turkey wants to encourage the international community, especially the European Union, to support and recognize Turkey's claims. In the ongoing dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean.

However, the maritime agreement has drawn criticism from various parties, including the Libyan Parliament based in Tobruk and Khalifa Haftar. Furthermore, the Turkey-Libya maritime agreement was also criticized by the EU, firmly stating that it would be on the side of EU members Greece and Cyprus in this dispute. Meanwhile, it warned Turkey that more sanctions would be imposed if Turkey did not improve its policies in the Eastern Mediterranean. In retaliation for the GNA-Turkey maritime agreement, the Greek PM expelled the Libyan ambassador, filed a complaint with the United Nations,

and also warned that his country would veto any political solution to the Libyan conflict at the EU Council level if the Turkish-Libyan agreement is not canceled. Furthermore, Egypt also carried out diplomatic attacks against Turkey, including sending a letter to the United Nations criticizing the Turkey-Libya maritime agreement as null and void [41]. However, these efforts failed, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations endorsed a Turkey-Libya maritime jurisdiction agreement covering parts of the Eastern Mediterranean in October 2020.

5. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that Turkey's foreign policy in Libya is related to Erdogan's AKP regime which dominates the parliament, and Erdogan's ideological tendency under the AKP. Furthermore, Turkey wants to be an actor to be considered in the regional and international region. To achieve this, Turkey takes advantage of the geocultural aspect, namely the presence of people of Turkish descent in Libya, especially those in the city of Misrata. The second factor behind Turkey's policy in Libya stems from its economic interests in the country. Moreover, the condition of the Lira exchange rate which has decreased since 2018 and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic has made the Libya issue even more important for Turkey. Good economic relations between Turkey and Libya have existed since the 1970s. To protect its economic interests from the many projects that had stalled for billions of dollars due to the Arab Spring, Turkey had to play a role in creating stability in Libya. For this reason, one of the ways is to develop good relations with al Sarraj who leads the GNA, Libya's legitimate internationally recognized government.

In addition, Turkey's geostrategic interests to gain influence in the Eastern Mediterranean region have also fueled Turkey's ambitions in the realm of the Libyan conflict. By signing a maritime deal with the GNA, Turkey expressed interest in energy reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean and this confrontational approach shows that any agreement involving the Mediterranean region does not ignore Turkey's interests in the region. Turkey wants to ensure that its rights to oil and gas in the Eastern Mediterranean remain secure. Therefore, the political power it supports must remain influential and viable militarily and financially.

Turkey's geographical position in the Balkans, Mediterranean, Middle East, and Europe gives it an unrivaled advantage in exerting influence in the region. But unfortunately, because of the Neo-Ottomanism ambitions of Erdogan and the AKP, Turkey is isolated. This isolation creates anxiety for Turkey and makes

Turkey's policies even more aggressive when it comes to dealing with other countries. Turkey's various considerations and problematic scenarios facing various events as the basis for Turkey's foreign policy in both the Libyan and Eastern Mediterranean issues only strengthen the anti-Turkish group. The only positive thing from Turkey's intervention in the internal sphere of Libya is that it has prompted western countries to convene the Berlin conference to deal with the development of the situation in Libya. In this way, Turkey has secured its place in all forms of future negotiations on Libya.

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