

Libya Crises at the Crossroads; How Turkey and Russia are approaching a New Political Balance

بحران لیبی : روسیه و ترکیه در جست و جوی موازنه سیاسی نو
با ارایه : دکتر علی باکر / متخصص و تحلیلگر مسایل سیاسی خاورمیانه از ترکیه
الکسی کلبنیکف / پژوهشگر موسسه روسی مسایل بین الملل (RIAC)
دکتر ولی گل محمدی (مدیر گروه مناسبات استراتژیک اوراسیا - خاورمیانه و عضو هیات علمی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس)

3 February 2021 (Wed)

Speakers:

- **Dr. Ali Bakeer**, is an Ankara-based political analyst and researcher who specializes in geopolitical and security trends in the Middle East with a specific focus on Turkey and the Arab states.
- **Dr. Alexey Khlebnikov**, is an expert on the Middle East at the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). He works as a consultant to various think tanks and institutions in Europe, the Middle East, Russia, and the US.

Moderator:

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Report on the Webinar

After 10 Years of a bloody Civil War, Libyans' fighting for National unity has reached its critical stage. In October 2020, the Turkish-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Arab Army (LNA) led by the Gen. Khalifa Haftar agreed on a UN-brokered ceasefire, which was pinned as a "fundamental step toward peace and stability" in a still-chaotic Libya. One promising intra-Libyan peace process is the [Libyan Political Dialogue Forum](#) (LPDF), sponsored by the United Nations, which recently agreed on a roadmap towards a national elections by December, 2021.

However, the logic behind hosting talks and planning elections is facing with many uncertainties. Despite a reported openness in mid-January, there are still many steps to take before an interim unity government can emerge in Libya. All signs point to the likelihood that competing political factions will draw from a spectrum of spoiler tactics to pre-empt what one group or another views as an unfavourable outcome."

It could be argue that the turning point is ; The second wave of civil war that erupted in 2014 has seeded parallel political and economic institutions, polarized the country's social spheres, and

fractured the national unity and territorial integrity. The vacuum that has left room for foreign powers outmaneuvering, protracted by the continuous interventionism of regional players, who pursue their narrow interests.

In a general picture, Libya remains fractured between rival governments, local militias and external powers. Pragmatically speaking, the path for Libya's contemporary peace talks to succeed does not exclusively pass through the intra-Libyan parties. Apparently, its prospect is highly interlinked with what really external powers such as Turkey, Egypt, Russia, UAE, and EU think. All external parties who has influence and interest in Libya crises are emphasizing the importance of a [Libyan-led solution](#), while acting differently to enhance their sphere of Influence and interest.

While the ceasefire agreement was welcomed by all parties, it has key weaknesses that have been clear from the outset. Most importantly, there is considerable doubt about the parties' commitment to the agreement.

The key foreign actors have been taking advantage of the West's inability to gain control of the situation, Turkey and Russia, although allied in some of conflicts throughout the world (in Syria, and Nagorno-Karabakh), have taken different sides in Libya.

By the way, in the post October 2020, key players are increasingly willing to engage in political solutions. But how it could be done and by which means is remained untouched. As a two key external players in the Libyan crises, How Turkey and Russia are approaching a New Political Balance?

Broadly speaking, in the short term, both Russia and Turkey remain rival of any negotiated outcome that would see other international player gain influence and possibly play a role that would inevitably reduce the decisive position they enjoy today. This is basically why both Ankara and Moscow have invested in solidifying their influence in the security sector by training and equipping Libyan forces.

A key component of this unifying approach will be working to replace the two separate military fronts – which are now being led by Turkey and Qatar on one side, and Egypt, Russia, and the UAE on the other – into a single body that actually provides security.

The key vulnerability of the UN peace process is its reinforcement of Libya's de facto partition. For Libyan politicians, retreating to parallel institutions that they exclusively control and blaming their rivals for the lack of effective governance is easier than working towards a shared national system. For the international parties to the conflict, divided institutions provide an array of opportunities to increase their influence. This approach to governance also polarises Libyan society, creating conflict and social dysfunction. Overall, Libya's de facto partition continues to be the single largest structural obstacle to efforts to reinforce a stabilising political process. Any political agreement that does not resolve this problem will fail