

2019.04.004. YURI ZININ. LIBYA: ISLAMIC FACTOR AFTER QADDAFI // *"Aziya i Afrika segodnya,"* Moscow, 2019, № 4, P. 2–8.

Keywords: arab spring, revolution, islam, Qaddafi, brothers-moslems, NATO, islamism, ethnic composing.

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Abstract. The author examines the role of the Islamic factor in Libya after the overthrow of its leader Muammar Gaddafi and the coming to power of new forces.

The collapse of state and military structures after the beginning of the "February 17 Revolution" during the internal conflict with the participation of NATO, and then the strife of local armed groups, led to the collapse of the vertical of unified power and the disintegration of the state. Since the summer of 2014, there has been dual power in the country with opposing "poles" of the administration. One is in Tripoli in the West, and the other – in Tobruk in the East, each with its own government, parliament and power block. The population of modern Libya professes Sunni Islam. The peculiarity of the country is that: Sufi brotherhood has long existed in its vast, and mostly desert area with a rare population.

The author notes that Libya combines religious diversity with a different tribal composition of the population: 85% of its inhabitants have tribal roots. There are more than 100 tribes. Muammar Gaddafi (head of Libya in 1969–2011) believed the construction of a single modern state as his main goal. The challenges that stood in this way were largely predetermined by the centuries-old mentality of the tribes with their rebellious nature, rejecting attempts to put them under the control of the center. Muammar Gaddafi relied on two factors in his politics:

official Islam, often associated with the personality of the leader, and tribal Libyan nationalism, based on the concept of "Jamahiriya" (state of the masses). The authorities suppressed any political opposition, the creation of parties or movements under Islamic banners.

Describing the events of 2011, the author notes that Islamist slogans were not at the top of the agenda at the beginning of the events in Libya, but they played the role of a trigger of protests in Benghazi – the capital of the Eastern district. Then spurred by cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in the European media, the crowd attacked the Italian Consulate and was shot by police. Protests escalated into unrest with demands for the resignation of Muammar Gaddafi and quickly seized Eastern Libya. In this case, religious motives merged with regional ones: there were beliefs that the East, which possessed 75% of Libya's oil resources, was disadvantaged in the distribution of oil revenues in the Gaddafi era, unlike Tripolitania. A number of Islamic jihadist militants have contributed to the insurgency against government forces.

The author notes that after the murder of Gaddafi National Transitional Council announced that the country has become to follow the "course of Sharia" and overturned the laws contradicting him. The author points out, that new forces have entered the political arena in the country, including Islamic radicals, who took advantage of the power vacuum created after the breakdown of state structures. In 2013, fourteen commanders of Islamist groups who previously fought in Afghanistan and were imprisoned, took positions in the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, prison chiefs, heads of military councils of cities, etc. The process of legalization and organizational strengthening of various factions of Islamists, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, has unfolded. They were engaged in the creation of groups on the ground, increasing political and other activity in the country, the development of foreign relations. Its political wing, the Justice and Construction Party was created. In March 2012, its registration was completed. The Justice and

Construction Party is financially and administratively independent, and members of the Muslim Brotherhood join on an individual basis. The Justice and construction party is the largest party in terms of its organisation, pragmatic programme and discipline. Its future is linked to its ability to fight against jihadism and contribute to overcoming the current Libyan crisis with dual power. At the same time, many authors urge not to overestimate the importance of the Muslim Brotherhood. Another Islamist party, Hizb al-Watan, was led by the former commander of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Abdul Hakim Belhaj. Also, there was a smaller political party, al-Umma al-Wasat, the head of which was also a former militant, the LIFG's law and religious leader, Sami al-Saadi, also known as Abu Munthir.

The author points out the differences and rivalries between the various tendencies existing among the political parties of Islam, in particular between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists. Earlier, in the era of Gaddafi, the influence of Salafism on the believers of Libya was incomparably greater in comparison with the underground groups of the Muslim Brotherhood. But it remained a very amorphous movement. Of the other radical formations, the author calls the "Saraya Defend Benghazi" (SDB). It was formed in June 2016 through the merger of the three Shura Councils of Benghazi.

Analyzing the conflict between Sufis and Salafis, the author notes that they are separated by questions of doctrine and the ritual and ceremonial side of faith. Salafis regard Sufis as "heretics" because the latter worship their local saints. Salafis oppose the Sufi practice of dhikr, collective feasts with dances and consider them a manifestation of black magic and paganism. Some analysts attribute this opposition to the competition of the two components in the field of Islam for influence among believers, especially young people. It is also obvious, and this is confirmed in the media, that various Salafi movements receive

assistance from abroad, primarily from the rich regimes of oil-producing countries.

The author emphasizes that the events in Libya after the beginning of the "Revolution of February 17" and up to the present day demonstrate external interference in its internal affairs, behind which stood both the West and part of the Arab world. One example is the spread of the influence of the Salafist movement in Libya, which was founded in the early 1990s by the Saudi theologian Sheikh Rabi' ibn Hādī al-Madchalī and is headed by him until now. It preaches strict obedience and submission of believers to their lords, a ban on rebellion, participation in any protests against rulers, in free elections, etc. The Sheikh is intolerant of other Salafi movements and Islamic sects. The influence of the trend "al-Madhali" extends to Egypt, Kuwait, UAE, Algeria and especially Libya. Al-Madhali is prominently positioned in cyberspace. It owns radio stations in the cities of al-Marj, Ajdabiya, other radio channels – "Islam," "Peace," "Salafism," a number of electronic portals and websites.

The future of Libya today seems very vague. Despite the long period of negotiations mediated by the UN and other parties, the way out of the crisis, primarily political, reconciliation between the two opposing poles of power in Tripoli and Tobruk with an unstable balance of power is not visible. Citizens of the country continue to die from violence due to clashes between the conflicting parties. In addition to the fact that the conflict between the former winners of Muammar Gaddafi turned into a dual power, inter-tribal relations intensified in the country, disagreements between Cyrenaica and Tripolitania revived, ideas in favor of Berber autonomy strengthened, attacks on Christians began (there were 100 thousand Christians in the era of Gaddafi, now – there are several thousand).

Since February 2011, Libya with uncontrolled borders of 6,000 km has been perceived as a polygon of destructive Islamist forces and a source of threats to neighbors in North and West Africa. They fear that the viruses of international terrorism and

anarchy will spread to them. In 2016, Tunisia built 200 km long barriers to guard along its border with Libya. Algeria is building a similar structure with a length of 900 km. In early 2012, some Tuareg rebels fled to Mali from Libya and, together with local Berbers, participated in a commission to create an independent region called Azawad. This led to a destabilization of the situation – a surge of violence with the participation of local Islamist radicals in Mali and Nigeria. The situation has not stabilized to this day. The situation has not stabilized to this day. Links between the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Belgium, France, Germany, Britain and Tunisia with Libyan militants are visible. Many of them were trained in ISIS camps in Libya.

It seems to the author that political Islam in Libya is a long-term phenomenon, although its ebbs and flows are possible. The Islamist camp in Libya is heterogeneous and non-monolithic. It includes various movements and branches: the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafis of various persuasions, followers of Sufi brotherhoods, jihadists with their connections with foreign like-minded people and with the media support of Arab media and its networks, especially from the Gulf. Adherents of these movements compete with each other, although they claim that Islam is the solution to all problems. This is due not only to their differences in the interpretation of faith, but also to the acute struggle between the coming into life of the third generation of global Jihad, as well as the competition of their leaders around the division of Libyan oil resources.

But, according to the author, it is still not necessary to demonize political Islam and its different branches, because it can give rise to new conflicts and strife. It is necessary to separate those who do not call for armed struggle and do not profess the ideology of terrorism, and to involve them in a free dialogue and exchange of views in order to find common ground and common approaches to solve acute problems.

Over the past eight years, there have been no influential charismatic figures in Libya capable of setting the tone for a

common agreement in favor of a compromise and implementing it. Local elites are torn by contradictions due to the backwardness of civil society, passivity, fragmentation of the population in conditions of dual power. At the same time, components of the political superstructure borrowed from the West, such as elected institutions, a multi-party system, etc., do not rely on the mature basis of an autochthonous society, where religious and tribal thinking, traditions and norms of the mentioned society are dominant.

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THOMAS FLICHY DE LA NEUVILLE. PERSIAN GULF, TOWARDS A COMPLEXIFICATION OF THE GEOPOLITICAL GAMES OF INFLUENCE // *English version of the article was submitted by the author for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2019.04.06

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The current tensions in the Persian Gulf deserve to be interpreted in the light of a recent geopolitical change: the traditional divide separating Saudi Arabia from its Iranian opponent has been scrambled by the apparition of a third force of opportunist neutrals in the region. In a gulf covering an area of 251 000 square kilometres, the power games of the coastal states as those of distant powers are becoming more complex. The situation of the Fifth Fleet could be compared to that of the Portuguese Navy during the mid-seventeenth century, or of the Royal Navy after the Second World War, at a time when the exclusive control of the Persian Gulf, had been replaced by a new balance of naval influences. The salty waters of the Gulf have long been a thermometer of power. The assumption of a closure