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The impact of the constitutional amendments on Algeria's position towards the Libyan

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Abstract

The article seeks to provide a scientific and critical reading on Algerian diplomatic behavior towards the ongoing Libyan crisis between the government of Tripoli and the military officer Khalifa Haftar, and their supporters from regional and international powers, especially with the suggestion to send the Algerian army out of its borders for deliberation.

With systematic analysis of the data related to Algerian diplomatic activity through documented statements and statistics, the researcher has reached several conclusions. The most important of these is that Algeria is seeking political solutions, intensifying diplomatic efforts rather of military solutions and security approaches. Also taking a single distance from all parties, including international forces, which are intervening or seeking to intervene in Libya; public references in direct or indirect ways to the proposal to send an Algerian military force outside its borders with the consent of the United Nations, which constitutes proactive behavior against future military problems and is not exclusively linked to Libya's crisis.

Keywords: Libyan crisis, Algerian National People's Army, Algerian diplomacy, Geopolitics.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The conflict in the neighboring State of Libya has intensified to the height of mid-2019. The Libyan crisis reach a situation of chaos and complexity unprecedented since the fall of the Qadhafi regime in 2011, and foreign interference in Libya's internal affairs is visible. Turkey, on one hand, seeks to impose itself in the East Mediterranean from the establishment of a base in Libya, with its strong influence over Sarraj's government, and on the other hand Egypt and its allies stand in return with retired Major General Khalifa Haftar, supporting him financially and militarily.

The Statements by the Libyan Council of Representatives that describing Turkish intervention as an "occupation" and that Libya was being violated its sovereignty by Turkey, which supported and blessed the movements of militias that controlled the west of the country, while the same parliament was quick to welcome the Egyptian position and call on the Egyptian regime to intervene militarily in order to preserve the security threatened by Turkey, which reflects the deteriorating situation in Libya and the intensity of the conflict.

The Algerian article of constitution 29 stated that: "Algeria refrains from resorting to war without prejudice to the legitimate sovereignty and freedom of other peoples and makes every effort to settle international disputes by peaceful means." The amendments carried a new paragraph stating that "Algeria, within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League, and in full compliance with its principles and objectives, can participate in peacekeeping operations abroad."

These persistent changes in Algeria's position on the Libyan crisis are consistent with the evolution of internal events, especially since Khalifa Haftar's pursuit of control over the entire Libyan territory since April 2019 and his rejection of any settlement with the central government in the capital Tripoli, internationally recognized by creating a breakthrough affecting Algeria, which has a borders of up to 1,000 km, this prompted Algeria to give serious consideration to changing its foreign policy.

In this scientific article, the researcher seeks to provide a critical reading in the transformation of Algerian official discourse, which in this regard posed the following problems: Are Algerian constitutional amendments a change in Algeria's attitude towards the Libyan crisis? Are these changes affecting the foundations of Algerian foreign policy or are they merely to address the Libyan crisis?

The importance of the research stems from the importance of the subject itself, as well as the fact that it represents a valuable and modern scientific addition to the growing Libyan crisis and Algeria's official position towards it.

Research methods: The researcher relied on the analytical descriptive approach to discuss the Algerian position on the worsening Libyan crisis and its internal conflict and the entry of regional parties on the line, particularly with the deployment of troops from the Algerian National People's Army on military missions outside Algeria's borders and under United Nations cover.

1.1. Determinants of Algerian Foreign Policy and Security Doctrine

1.2. The Algerian Foreign Policy - A Historical Approach:

If Algerian' foreign policy doctrine was shaped by historical contexts and the accumulations of its political experience in the ongoing struggle against the French colonialism, then mature more during the stages



during which the political struggle was launched under the banner of “National Movement”, which at that time took on significant international dimensions. Algeria build its position on international issues at the core of its suffering from colonial policies, on which it adopted the principle of “respect the right of self-determination” in their foreign policy and support for all forms of liberation movements in the world and non-interference in the internal affairs of states, which has emerged in Algeria's international positions since independence in 1962.

It has established a special body responsible for relations with libertarian movements since 1964 and has supported them materially and logistically. Politically, it has opened its territory to train and rehabilitate its recruits, and if it is calculated that Algeria has turned its back on many liberation or secession movements such as those in Eritrea, However, Algerian international position was based on respect for the boundaries inherited from the colonial era, at which point Algeria was resolute and did not accept a waiver¹.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Algeria emerged as one of the international policy makers through its support for liberation movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia. One of the most important was South Africa and the Palestinian and Saharan issues, which made it adirection of the liberation movement. Algeria clashed with western power policies, particularly with French and America². Algerian government stated that is should respect the sovereignty in the management and protection of the wealth by the declaration of the nationalization of incinerators. It also called for a change in the structure of the international system, which had been built at a stage dominated by colonial politics³.

Although Algerian diplomacy had declined during the 1980s and 1990s owing to the internal crisis that had affected it, and followed by a significant drop in oil prices, but this did not discourage Algeria from upholding its principles in foreign policy and the right of self-determination. The arrival of President Abdul-Aziz Bouteflika in 1999, Algeria resumed its external diplomatic activity firmly on the same principles, as evidenced by its assertion during the Bouteflika period of support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the consideration of the Sahrawi issue as a decolonization issue.

Algerian position was also clearly reflected in the 2003 Iraqi crisis, where it considered the presence of the United States to be a violation of Iraq's sovereignty, as well as in the Syrian crisis during 2011-2019 ⁴. Over the decades these attitudes have made Algeria a good reputation in the international arena and gained the confidence of many international actors, not only because it possesses these positions but because it has had a full positive impact on the resolution of many international conflicts.

It was the most important contributor to the liberation of American prisoners in Iran and was a party to the settlement of the Iraqi-Iranian conflict and played a role in halting the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia. At the Arab and Moroccan level, Algeria was an important part to the settlement off the conflict between Libya and Egypt and to halting the dispute between Tunisia and Libya.

2. Geopolitical Determinants of Algerian Foreign Policy According To Yves Lacoste's Approach

In 1972, the French researcher Yves Lacoste put forward one of the leaders of the Francophone School of International Relations Analysis in a scientific article with the idea that “geography” was not a descriptive science of a geographical area and only; As far as science can determine the “power scales”, this concept has



been an important point or critical milestone in political science, and placed it as the founder of what is known today as the “Geopolitic” or “Géopolitique.”

In his reference book, Yves Lacoste considered “geopolitics” (from national State security not defined by the ideological, cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic dimensions to the extent determined by the geographical security of its territory); As a result, the concept of “regional security” has emerged and spread widely ⁵, with the emergence of subtle concepts, such as identity, economic and political blocs, and others that bear the idea of conglomerates and federations, most notably the European Union ⁶.

This concept also prevailed among the Asian continent in beginning of 1980s. Several regional blocs emerged, most notably: ASEAN, the FTA Free Asian Trade Area, the Shanghai OCS Union, the Union of East Asian States, the North Asian States and the Central Asian States. The idea of transforming the Union of Southeast Asian Nations into a broad-based organization, which later tried to integrate the federations themselves, and other federations between African, Asian and European continents for cooperation and trade.

Lacoste's geopolitical concept highlighted the importance of the geographical factor in the course and political orientation, and contributed to changing political balances. It changed the factor (motivation) and (union or bloc) as an idea of the territory's role in ensuring security (the Union has become an important player in the political decision-making of states, securing their security and areas of influence.)

For Algeria, the idea of the bloc is embodied in the League of Arab States, the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Although none of them had a clear impact on Algeria's current regional level, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as the African Union to date, had demonstrated their failure to ensure the security, stability and development of their States, owing to the intersection and divergence of the interests of their member States (among them, Algeria), which is divided into different geographical areas. Therefore, for Algeria now, according to the concept of “geopolitical Lacoste”, there are three key points for Algeria's attention to ensure a real position on the global map:

- 1- The Maghreb and North Africa(Mediterranean)
- 2- Arab region
- 3- African coast region

Accordingly, geographical location has an important role to play in making and defining the country's foreign policy and in defining its political roles. It also has a special position in determining the type of threats affecting and facing the state entity. As for Algeria, it is a country with an important maritime interface in the Mediterranean and extends south to the contiguity of the Sahel. Today, Algeria is considered the largest African and Arab country in terms of area after the division of Sudan; the fact which makes Algeria vulnerable to major security tensions.

These are still significantly affected by the implications of Libya's security breakthroughs. (which is the subject of our research), noting that these geographical characteristics have become major security threats rather than an enabler, This is reflected in the fact that the difficult terrain that



characterizes the north of the country, which was the hotbed of armed groups during the “Black decade” and the great border of the south and extending over a desert area, makes it difficult to control and has become a corridor for illegal migratory movements and arms smuggling.

Moreover, the tension between Algeria and Morocco continues to hamper coordination in the control of the two countries' borders. Algeria must act at least as an influential regional force in the region to ensure its security and sovereignty over its territory.

3. Algerian Position towards the Libyan Crisis:

3.1. Algerian Diplomatic Efforts and Libyan Reaction:

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, Algeria has stood firmly and clearly in its foreign policy and called on the international parties not to interfere in Libya's internal affairs. As the situation between the parties became tenser, international voices calling for the resumption of dialogue between those parties have returned, reinforcing the Algerian position, in order to stop the rapidly deteriorating events in Libya and prevent the establishment of a soft State ⁷.

This prompted Algeria to be an important actor or party to the events without endorsing one party at another's expense. The Algerian President has received ambassadors from the United States, Germany and Italy, as well as France, to address the Libyan crisis since the beginning of this year 2022. It also held meetings with Libyan neighbouring Heads of State, particularly Egypt and Tunisia, and discussed the matter with the Turkish President during his official visit to Turkey in an effort to find a settlement to end the crisis.

Tunisian President Kais Saïd that declared that coordination between Tunisia and Algeria in the context of these events are in common position to protect Libya from foreign interventions that might divide it and make it a subject of the aspirations of other international actors. In particular, the problem of arms flows, illegal migration, terrorist groups and mercenaries, as well as the problem of refugees has worsened.

These are security problems affecting Libya's neighborhood, especially Tunisia and Algeria. This year, Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Boukadoum announced President Abdelmadjid Tebboune initiative to end the conflict in Libya, away from any foreign interventions, by calling on all parties to discuss the issue with a clear emphasis on the refusal to divide Libya and make it a focus of tension and fighting in the region ⁸.

This initiative coincided with the visit of Boukadoum to Libya and his meeting with Khalifa Haftar, Ayyan and elders of the country, as confirmed by Khalifa Haftar, while expressing satisfaction with the Algerian role in Libya. In return, the Foreign Minister of the Tobruk government, Abdul Hadi al-Hawaij, welcomed the Algerian role.

Although Khalifa Haftar had previously threatened to transfer the war to Algerian territory, Algeria remained committed to a peaceful solution and avoided everything leading to an increase in conflict and worsening the crisis. After the visit of the Libyan speaker of Representatives, the council Akila Saleh, in Tobruk, has persuaded them to maintain dialogue and a peaceful solution, indicators of Algeria's success in determining the same distance from the conflicting parties in Libya and its important place in resolving the issue.



The Algerian security approaches based on peaceful dialogue to calm the situation and the Libyan crisis. Algeria suffered during the 1990s from severe internal conflict crisis that ended with the emergence of terrorism, in which the harsh policies carried the nature of direct military confrontation with terrorist groups since the beginning of the crisis failed, while peaceful security approaches that depend on the discussion have calmed the situation. President Yamin Zeroual's Law launched in 1995 and the Civil Harmony and National Reconciliation Law ended with the coming of Abdul-Aziz Bouteflika, which clearly stabilized the situation at the beginning of the second millennium.

This important experience in Algerian history has made it insist on ending the conflict, putting an end to the crunch course of events in Libya and to take it out of the quagmire of the civil war and avoiding the spectra of partition, as stressed by the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune during his meeting with all Libyan officials and regional and international actors ⁹.

Although Egypt is a historically allied of Algeria, and their relations between them back to the period of the Algerian Revolution. The coordination between the two countries has always taken place at the highest level; however, Algeria has given no importance to the Egyptian initiative announced by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, which many saw as direct interference in Libya's internal affairs. It is also supported by Russia, which in turn is Algeria's largest historical ally at the international level. However, all these interventions did not deter Algeria from upholding its position and fundamental principle in its foreign policy towards Libya and preferred to sign with Tunisia and Morocco in a united and neutral attitude towards all parties.

3.2. Features of the change in Algerian location:

The Libyan crisis weighs heavily on Algeria and its economy through a full-fledged border tension that forces Algeria military budget and puts it under considerable political pressure by playing on Algeria's security preoccupation. In Algeria, the Libyan issue takes place in every debate. With the coming of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, it has also called for the need to take the necessary measures to protect the borders and the region, as well as to reactivate and revitalize Algerian role at the international level, particularly with regard to the Libyan issue and in general the African Sahel region.

The Algerian army has never intervened outside its borders, except for its participation in the 67-73 war, the purpose of which was to support the brotherly Arab States in their war on Israeli aggression, with some decisive participation in the resolution of conflicts under the cover of the United Nations peacekeeping. Notably the United Nations mission to Angola and Haiti; However, Algeria has never hesitated to open its military schools and institutes to training and rehabilitating security personnel from various countries that need to do so in the framework of international cooperation. Since the beginning of the Libyan crisis, Algeria has offered to train various security and military agents in border protection and internal security rather than direct military intervention, as stated by Libya's delegate to the United Nations "Ibrahim al-Dabashi", that the Algerian authorities have agreed to train the armed forces, which calls for the reconstruction and composition of the Libyan army ¹⁰.



These formations made available by Algeria to the Libyan Armed Forces are the result of numerous security agreements concluded between the two countries. Some of them date back to the years of Qadhafi's rule and others imposed by the nature of the changes during the post-Qadhafi period. The security is agreements and not limited to the possibility of forming security agencies. In some, joint military cooperation agreements to counter aggression such as those agreed in 2001 within the framework of the so-called fight against terrorism.

The first preoccupation, which presents a perception of the possibility of changing Algeria's position on military intervention, did not come with the promulgation of the amendments to the Constitution. Since the beginning of the year, the Libyan side has called on Algeria to give effect to these security agreements, which require joint military cooperation in the face of aggression. "Muhammad Qanunu" spokesman for the Libyan Army in the Government of Al Wifak stated that, "Libya seeks further cooperation with the State of Algeria. Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj called on Algeria to activate security cooperation agreements between the two countries in order to repel the aggression to which the capital Tripoli is being subjected by General Haftar and his supporters, referring to Egypt and its allies."¹¹

The Libyan demands were followed by Algerian announcement of its draft amendment to the Constitution, the most important of which stipulated that the National People's Army could conduct operations outside its international borders. However, the previous Constitution did not literally stand in the way of the army's extraterritorial intervention, but was related to a political tradition that Algeria had traditionally maintained since its independence, in which a number of identity structures overlapped the perceptions of external security threats to Algerian decision-makers. Consequently, the constitutional amendment did not constitute a real change, but other invisible changes outside the context of the amendment of the Constitution.

According to Algerian perception, insecurity in the Maghreb and the Sahel region defines a concern that could negatively affect Algeria, especially as it contributes to the continuation of terrorist operations and the strengthening of smuggling networks and terrorist. Thus, the Libyan conflict was not considered a problem for Algeria as an internal matter, but it was concerned that the conflict would lead to the total collapse of the Libyan, which was the same apprehension that it had on the financial issue. Thus make Algeria fully concerned and unable to remain on the margins of the situation in Libya and this is confirmed by the political scholar Snoussi Ismail. Snoussi Ismail considers it difficult for Algeria to take a neutral stance on what is happening in Libya, especially after regional States have overcome all geopolitical fundamentals by supporting the transition of the conflict to the western side bordering Algeria, which is in turn a vital area for Algeria and where all of Sonatrach's major petroleum investments are concentrated.

Algerian foreign policy attaches great importance to balance of power by seeking to create entry points for Algeria in the light of these changes. Algeria always was careful not only for its territory, but for neighboring countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Niger and the African Sahel Region. Thus the Libyan crisis in the nature of its recent changes is a source of concern that its territory will become a military base that will alter the region's power balance, this was clearly reflected in the statement made by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of



Algeria in his description of Libyan conflicting powers. He said that Libya's conflicting international parties were the same as those that had previously conflicted in Syria, referring to Turkey, Russia, the Gulf States and their allies.

On the other hand, what prevents Algeria from lining up behind one of the parties is its avoidance of any imbalance in relations with the balance of power intervening in Libya. Standing alongside the Al-Wifak government as the legitimate government will enter it into a strong confrontation with Egypt and Russia. Perhaps even with France, where the Malian cooperation agreement brings it together. Linking up on the side facing Al-Wifak government may place it in a confrontational position with Turkey, which for years has sought to strengthen relations with it, as well as Italy, which is Algerian's primary partner in the gas sector ¹².

From a different perspective, the constitutional amendment and the possibility of the army moving beyond its borders may have nothing to do with the Libyan crisis. The amendment came after a year of people's movement demanding a democratic transformation in the country. The Algerian military has always been fully independent, with its decision-making and concentrated in the command of the staff, by given the possibility of movement after the approval of the elected people in the parliament and the People's Movement demand's towards further democratization of State institutions, including the Army Foundation, which is stated in the Army magazine that the proposal to amend the Constitution does not apply to the extraterritorial dispatch of the National People Army by a decision of the President as Leader.

The amendment also affirmed that the army will always remain a strong and a deterrent force against any threat to the country's security and integrity, and will remain faithful to the principles and values of the Algerian revolution. On the other hand, what prevents Algeria from lining up behind one of the parties is its avoidance of any imbalance in relations with the balance of power intervening in Libya.

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4. Conclusion

The study concluded that, we cannot assume that Algerian will intervene militarily in Libya. All indicators show Algeria is realistically within one distance of all parties, including those international forces



that seek to intervene in Libya either directly or indirectly. Algerian diplomacy seeks to find peaceful political solutions away from a military solution, especially since there are no real indications of a clear security threat to Algeria that would necessitate the military's extraterritorial intervention. The issue of intervention could be a proactive step towards the preparation of a situation that might be more intransigent in the future, which would not be aimed at combating one party as much as it would be a force to resolve the conflict, and which might be part of the consolidation of institutions in democratic attempts.

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