

Libyan Peace Talks and Russian Diplomacy 101

By [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Global Research, January 21, 2020

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 17 January
2020

Region: [Europe](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#),
[Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Libya stands at a precarious watershed between a peaceful political settlement – or further civil war. But at least the two main warring factions this week entered into a process of dialogue when they attended a summit in Moscow hosted by Russia.

Turkey was the second party at the summit acting as a mediator, along with Russia. Ankara is a staunch supporter of the UN-recognized Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) based in Tripoli. Moscow recognizes the GNA too, but it also has strong links with the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Field Marshall Khalifa Haftar which is based in the eastern city of Tobruk.

Potentially, the diplomatic process that has got underway could bring an end to nearly nine years of conflict in Libya. The constructive involvement of Russia and Turkey is analogous to what these two nations have achieved in forging a political settlement for ending the war in Syria.

Arguably, Libya could represent an even more challenging task compared with Syria. At least in Syria there was a central, functioning national state with which to build peace on. By contrast in Libya, there is no unifying national state. The conflict there is more defined as an archetypal civil war, whereas in Syria the conflict was based on the defense of a state in the face of foreign-backed aggression. The task of procuring a comprehensive peace accord in Libya could therefore be more complicated and elusive.

As Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov pointed out this week:

"The Libyan statehood was bombed by NATO in 2011, and we are still facing the consequences of this illegal, criminal escapade, the Libyan people first of all."

We may recall that the US and its European NATO allies conducted a seven-month aerial bombing campaign from March-October 2011 in Libya under the false and derisory pretenses of organizing "a humanitarian intervention". That murderous NATO blitzkrieg resulted in the brutal lynching of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. The oil-rich country then became overrun by Islamist extremists and warlords, and has remained in a state of chaos ever since. Syria could have fallen by the same nefarious fate of NATO-backed regime change, only for Russia's military intervention at the end of 2015 to defend the state owing to their long-time alliance.

The NATO destruction of Libya has had disastrous geopolitical consequences. Extremists

travelled from there to wage war against the state of Syria. This covert deployment of militants and weapons trafficking to Syria had the backing of the US and Turkey. That lethal conduit greatly exacerbated the war and death toll in Syria.

Libya, as a failed state, then became a gateway for millions of refugees from the Middle East and Africa attempting to enter Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. Hundreds of thousands of people have died from drowning in capsized shoddy boats. Crime and human trafficking have burgeoned. And Europe has borne sharp internal political divisions from the destabilizing inward migration.

For the past nine years, the NATO powers have washed their hands of their criminal destruction of Libya and the horrendous repercussions for the region.

Russia has shown commendable leadership in trying to piece Libya together through diplomatic engagement.

As an opinion [article](#) in the Washington Post observed:

“While President Trump spends his time tweeting insults and threatening to start Middle Eastern wars, Russia is filling the vacuum in international diplomacy. In the case of Libya, ending a bloody conflict at the doorstep of Europe in an oil-rich country is a major deal.”

The conference in Moscow this week produced a shaky ceasefire. GNA leader Fayeze Sarraj signed up to the truce, but the LNA’s Khalifa Haftar left Moscow with-holding his signature, saying that he wanted more time to consider. A truce does seem to be holding, however.

A follow-up peace summit is taking place this weekend in Berlin, hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The two Libyan leaders are expected to attend, as are Russia and Turkey, the two main guarantors. Other nations invited to participate include the US, China, Britain, France and Italy. Arab states which back different factions in Libya are also slated to attend: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE (which support the LNA) and Qatar (which backs the GNA).

Turkey has [reportedly](#) sent militia under its control from Syria to back up the GNA. Relations between Ankara and LNA leader Haftar are volatile. Turkey’s President Erdogan has threatened to deploy Turkish troops to Libya if Haftar’s forces resume their offensive to take over Tripoli.

Libya’s combustible conditions could yet explode into war, a war which may become another bloody proxy battlefield for international powers.

Nonetheless, Russia has created a diplomatic space for political progress towards stability and peace in the North African country. Can a government of national unity be formed by the warring sides? It’s not clear if the GNA has the inherent political stability to make a partnership work.

But one thing is clear. Russia’s diplomatic prowess has salvaged a chance for peace out of the unholy mess that NATO left behind.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Featured image is from New Eastern Outlook.

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Copyright © [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2020

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca