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Libya's Govt - The Political Leadership & The 1st Logic.

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On Sept. 1, 1969, Col. Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi and 11 fellow "free officers" (the RCC) staged their coup d'etat against the Sanoussi monarchy. Since then there have been several cycles of structural change in Libya, with the cabinet and central legislature elected every year by the GPC. While the country has been in a state of flux, the ruling superstructure has remained unchanged for years, with five out of the 12 "free officers" still nominally "on top" but in reality they are "dormant". The other seven have either fled Libya, perished or been arrested.

So above the "second logic" of technocrats (see profiles in OMT & DT) is Qadhafi's logic with a time zone different from that of the West.

Here is the dormant top tier of the first logic:

- Leader of the Revolution/Head of State: Col. Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi.
- Suspended 2nd-in-command: Maj. Abdel-Salam Jalloud (who might re-appear).
- The Former General Provisional Committee for Defence Co-ordinators, RCC:
- Col. Abu-Bakr Yunes Jaber.
- Maj. Mustafa al-Kharrubi.
- Maj. Khoueildi Humeidi

Below these men, the latter three being "sleeping partners" with Jalloud under house arrest and Qadhafi reigning absolute and getting ever louder, the "Brother Colonel" keeps his first logic alive. This combines both a simple formula for the "top regime symbols" to nominally "retain" power, a formula not very different from that applied in Syria, and a complex concept of "constant revolution" with Qadhafi dancing constantly and leaping from one idea to another.

The simplest explanation of "constant revolution" is this: a state of organised disorganisation called The Great Jamahiriya, i.e., a combination of "the masses" in a state of statelessness, with its superstructure consisting of overlapping lines of authority and a de-centralised administration under centralised control. In addition, Qadhafi has his own "inner circles" of allies and relatives, circles which can vary frequently. All this suggests that, without Qadhafi being in control, the prospects for Libya could be far worse. Any coup in Libya could be followed by messy violence and chaos.

Each one of these "top five", again with Jalloud under house arrest, is distrustful of the other four and has a tribal base of his own which can be strong or be divided. Only Qadhafi has managed to keep this symbolic group together. It is impossible for one tribal group in the military to control all the Libyan armed forces. Qadhafi has been saying this for years.

Qadhafi has managed to trick his way out of numerous regional and international traps, including one caused by alleged Libyan roles behind the Lockerbie and UTA bombings. He has paid generous compensations to the victims' families to prevent his being called personally responsible for these bombings. Libya has paid \$2.7 bn for the families of the 270 Lockerbie victims at the rate of \$10m per family. It has also paid handsomely to the families of the victims of the French airliner UTA. Now Qadhafi calls President Nicolas Sarkozy a friend, with France doing a lot of business in Libya. The same is true in the case of most other EU leaders.

His favoured Saif has visited the US and made friends with top members of both the George W. Bush's Republican and Barack Obama's Democratic administrations. Col Qadhafi is a friend of Russias PM Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev, and so forth.

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Qadhafi is a bizarre figure, often funny - sometimes with shocking antics. Just as he tends to ridicule many of them, most Arab and other world leaders have come to be amused by Qadhafi's behaviour. But behind this mask, there is a shrewd Qadhafi who can be equally shocking with his guile as negotiator. For example, he got Italy to apologise and pay \$5bn in compensation for its having colonised Libya. That deal was sealed in March 2008 at a ceremony in Libya with visiting Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi. At the ceremony, Berlusconi offered an apology to the Libyan people and heaped praise on Qadhafi, inviting the man President Ronald Reagan once called a "mad dog" to attend an April G-8 conference of advanced industrial powers in Rome.

The two men hugged. "I don't know what to call him", Berlusconi said, smiling at Qadhafi, who was smiling back. The Italian leader then said of the Libyan ruler: "He has so many titles: The Leader of the Revolution, King of Kings, Chairman of the African Union. And he deserves them and more". Eventually, ENI had to foot that \$5bn bill, but only after the Italian energy group had agreed to cede much of its profit share under revised EPSAs (see omt2LibFieldsJuly13-09). Yet Berlusconi was not amused by 2009 speculations that Libya's NOC might eventually take up to 50% of ENI's share and merge with it to become a Libyan IOC (see omt4LibFieldsJul27-09).

In a dramatic development in December 2003, after nine months of secret talks, the mercurial Qadhafi agreed with British and US negotiators for Libya to get rid of its WMD. In return, Libya's international isolation came to an end and in 2004 the US lifted its sanctions against this North African country. Thus Libya has been reintegrated into the global cycle in economic and political terms, with US oil companies having returned to their operations in the country.

Internationally, however, Qadhafi's tricks have earned him the reputation that he is no longer to be taken seriously by any quarters of consequence. One expert described the Libyan ruler after the UN suspended its sanctions against Tripoli in April 1999 as follows: He is more likely to be called in to talk-shows to offer his solutions to world problems than to despatch agents intent on violently resolving them.

Another expert, an Arab attending the opening of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit at Sharm el-Shaikh on July 15, 2009, described Qadhafi as "a cat who likes to call himself a tiger". The expert said it after he watched the host and new NAM Chairman, Egyptian President Mubarak, present Qadhafi - as the Libyan ruler was about to make his speech - with the added title of "King of the Kings of Africa". The Colonel smiled - God knows what he was smiling for - but when he got heated up during his speech he shouted: The UNSC is "terrorist" and listed other international institutions as "terrorist", until he calmed down and humbly went back to his seat. The expert later asked: "Did he really believe they (the other rulers) bought what he was trying to sell?"

Qadhafi on June 10, 2009, arrived in Rome - on his first state visit to Italy amid tight security measures resulting from months of negotiations. He had his usual tent pitched in the garden outside the villa where he was staying. This was the first visit by a Libyan head of state since the Italian colonisation of his country ended. Qadhafi wore a strange military uniform on which he had the photo of Libya's freedom fighter Umar al-Mukhtar. He was accompanied by Mukhtar's surviving son - a very old man barely able to walk. Qadhafi slept at the villa and received guests at his tent.

As Qadhafi thus brought a heavy load of history, Berlusconi proclaimed: "A sad chapter has been closed". But history was not entirely forgotten. Some in Rome remained furious over Libya's expulsion of 20,000 Italians in 1970 in retaliation for Italy's colonisation decades earlier. Human Rights Watch (HRW) on June 10 said Qadhafi's visit celebrated "a dirty deal". Shortly after he came to power, Qadhafi confiscated the Libya belongings of the expelled Italians as a "deposit of the colonial reparations" owed by Rome. "It was a very humiliating experience", recalled Tripoli-born Giovanna Ortu, president of an association of Italians expelled from Libya. Ms Ortu said she was forced to strip naked in public, along with other young women, before being deported. Ortu and other Libyan-born Italians were to meet Qadhafi in a ceremony on June 13 in the tent - as he did during his 2007 visit to Paris - but she said authorities invited her only on condition she would not present herself as an expelled Italian. She said; "It's all so sad, all we wanted was an apology".

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Expelled Italians were claiming \$850m in reparations - not from Qadhafi, but from the Italian government out of the agreed \$5bn compensation to Libya. But Berlusconi refused to cover the "deposit" Qadhafi had taken from the Italian residents in Libya. Ms Ortu said she bore no resentment towards Qaddafi, adding: "I'm glad Italy and Libya are finally renewing their ties, but I cannot see why we cannot get our reparations and an apology. We feel betrayed by history".

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