

Introduction gaddafi.
he has ignored the
country's constitution



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Introduction

Libya is one of the smallest countries in Africa. Situated in North Africa, the country has its capital in Tripoli. It is associated with a relatively small population that mainly consists of Arab ethnic groups. Libya's economy thrives on the export of oil and the manufacturing sector. Being a socialist country, resource allocation is determined by government policies.

The political system in the country is poorly developed and is characterized by lack of democracy, crime against humanity and lack of freedom (Daoud, 2011). Consequently, the country has recently faced serious political unrest that has attracted the interest of the international community. This paper analyzes the leadership of the country's rule, Moammar Gaddafi, before the political unrest. The political, economic and social situation in Libya will be illuminated.

Part A

Aspects of the Government

Nearly all aspects of the government of Libya are influenced by Gaddafi.

He has ignored the country's constitution and introduced his own political ideologies outlined in his publication referred to as the Green Book (Simpkins, 2010). The executive branch of the government consists of the 'Jamahiriya sector' led by a prime minister and is responsible for running the government. It also consists of the 'revolution sector' led by Gaddafi. The "revolution sector is not elected and has unlimited term in office" (Simpkins, 2010). Besides, it dictates and influences all decisions made by the Jamahiriya sector.

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The legislative consists of the “ General People’s Congress (GPC) which is made up of 2700 members” (Peters, 2006). It is responsible for appointing the cabinet and key government officers. However, all appointments are approved by Gaddafi through the revolution sector.

Elections are done indirectly through various Congress representatives and only those approved by the revelation sector are elected. Political parties are prohibited in the country. The judiciary is controlled by the revolution sector and the constitution is based on Islamic law and Italian civil law (Peters, 2006).

However, “ the revolution sector has veto powers over the constitution” (Mittelman, 2011). The government controls all aspects of the economy. These trends show that Gaddafi exercises autocratic rule through the revolution sector. This gives him the opportunity to influence all aspects of the government through his political ideologies.

Gaddafi’s Power Base as an Undisputed Leader

Gaddafi’s autocratic rule has been perpetuated by the political structure he created in the country and his influence over the military. The country’s military is not independent and is being led directly by Gaddafi and his loyal generals. He has used his power over the military to avert political opposition from both internal and external interest groups.

He has also established a ‘ revolution court’ that handles cases related to “ political and crime against the state” (Simpkins, 2010). As the head of the revolution sector, he has full control over the ‘ revolution court’ and can thus use it to suppress political opposition. The veto power of the revolution

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sector gives him the opportunity to manipulate the constitution in order to justify his leadership (Mittelman, 2011). Besides, he influences the outcomes of elections since only those approved by the revolution sector are elected. This means that his political opponents can not be elected to any public office. Even though the GPC is supposed to be an independent body, he uses its members to spy on political opposition.

Due to his influence in the government, he has been able to use state resources to defeat his political opponents. These trends describe Gaddafi's power base and are responsible for his extended rule.

Standard of Living in Libya

Despite the political discontent associated with his leadership, Gaddafi has facilitated improvements in the social welfare of his subjects. Before the current political unrest, " Libya's infant mortality rate was the lowest in Africa" (Bruce, 2009). The country's life expectancy was 74 years which was the highest in the continent. Unlike other African countries, Libya has been able to feed over 95% of its population from its resources. For example, in early 2011, the government eliminated all taxes on food imports following the rise in food prices in the international market (Bruce, 2009). This was meant to improve food distribution.

Even though the government controls the economy, distribution of wealth has been relatively uniform. Currently, the country has the highest " gross domestic product (GDP) at purchasing power parity per capita of \$ 15, 000" (Bruce, 2009). The government has been able to help over 93% of the population to live above the poverty line. Distribution of key services such as

education and health has been done fairly through subsidies and special considerations to disadvantaged groups (Solomon, 2008). Therefore, inequality is relatively low in the country.

However, corruption and inefficiency in the government is still a threat to achieving higher levels of equality.

Law and Order

Libya's constitution is based on Italian civil law and Sunni Islamic laws that provide the framework for maintaining law and order in the country (Simpkins, 2010). The judicial system is characterized by a hierarchy of courts. These include the summary courts, courts of first instance, appeal court and Supreme Court. Freedom of speech is limited in the country (Peters, 2006). The government has control over the state owned and privately owned media.

Any statements against the government are prohibited and punishable. Civil liberty is also limited in the country. For example, freedom of association through unions and political parties are prohibited (Peters, 2006).

Collective bargains are also discouraged by the government. Cases of forced labor have also been reported especially in the military. The judicial system is ineffective since it is influenced by the government. The crime rate in the country is relatively low as compared to other African countries. This is attributed to the severe punishments associated with the Islamic laws used in the country (Peters, 2006). For example, striking workers can be imprisoned for very many years and capital punishment is still in common use (Peters, 2006).

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Acts of terror are minimal within the country. However, the country's government has always been accused of sponsoring acts of terror in Western territories.

Relationship with Foreign Powers

In 1970s the country focused on establishing political ties with Middle East countries such as Palestine. During this time it focused on countering the influence of Western countries in Africa as well as Middle East.

Thus it closed " UK's and America's embassies in its territories" (Swart & Solomon, 2008). Libya also established strong political ties with the former Soviet Union due to their bilateral trade in weapons. However, the relationship ended in 1987 when Libya breached the terms and conditions of using the weapons (Swart & Solomon, 2008). Following the failure of Arab countries to challenge UN's sanctions on Libya in 1990s, the country terminated its relationship with most countries in Middle East.

Consequently, the country has focused on establishing bilateral relationships with " neighboring North African countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Sub-Sahara African countries" (Swart & Solomon, 2008) in the last ten years. From 2003, the country decided to open up to the international community through trade and participation in international bodies. For example, it served for two years as the representative of Africa in the UN Security Council (Swart & Solomon, 2008). Currently, Libya trades with European countries such as Italy and Germany. At the moment, the country has its greatest affiliation to African countries especially in the North and East of the continent due to three reasons. First, Gaddafi is committed to

establishing a United Africa with a central government (Bruce, 2009). Thus he needs to win the support of most African countries.

Second, most African countries are its trade partners (Bruce, 2009). The country sells its oil in Africa and imports its food from the same. Finally, most African leaders support Gaddafi's political ideologies of de facto leadership (Swart & Solomon, 2008). This forms the basis of his association with such leaders and their countries.

Economic and Educational Development

Libya has one of the most stable economies in Africa and this can be justified by the following trends. In 2009, it realized a "real GDP of \$ 85.00 billion" (John, 2009). The country's GDP per capita over the same period was \$ 13,400 which was the highest in Africa (John, 2009). However, the growth in the country's real GDP reduced in 2009 by 0.7% due to the financial crisis (John, 2009).

Currently the growth rate of its GDP has picked up as the effects of the financial crisis recede. Oil and natural gas are the main natural resources in the country. Agriculture is least developed due poor climate and soil.

However, it produces wheat, barley and fruits. Currently, it imports 75% of its foodstuffs. Petroleum, textile and food processing are the main industries in the country. Libya's export in 2009 was valued at "34.24 billion while its imports over the same period totaled 22.

11 billion" (John, 2009). This means that it had a surplus of trade which is very rare in Africa. The education system in Libya is highly subsidized by the government with elementary education being compulsory. However, there <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-gaddafi-he-has-ignored-the-countrys-constitution/>

are inadequate qualified Libyan teachers. Besides, the “ secondary school enrollment rate especially among female students is very low” (John, 2009). Higher education and training is also not well development due to government’s interference with the activities of Universities. The institutions of higher learning are also not enough and this explains why the government sponsors its students to pursue higher education in foreign countries.

Reasons for the Discontent

The political discontent in Libya occurred due to the following reasons.

First, the citizens were interested in regaining their liberty and freedom (Hillston, 2011). The political reforms demanded by the public include a wider democratic space and a functioning judicial system. Second, the government was not popular due its crime against humanity (Gatung, 2011). It has been accused of detaining citizens for years without trail, torture and use of excessive force on those opposed to it. Third, Gaddafi has isolated Libya from other countries for a long time. Consequently, the citizens want to be integrated with the rest of the world in order to enjoy the economic, social and political benefits associated with such integration. Finally, the socialist government is corrupt and inefficient in achieving rapid economic growth (Hillston, 2011).

Thus the citizens are interested in a free market system that encourages private ownership of property and competition. Therefore, the main causes of the discontent are lack of civil liberty, lack of freedom and too much of government involvement in the economy.

Part B

Priority Problems

In order to achieve rapid restoration of peace and stability in Libya, the following problems should be given priority. First, lack of civil liberty and freedom must be addressed as soon as possible. This is because it is the main cause of the current political discontent (Hillston, 2011). The citizens will be satisfied with government of the day if they are able to exercise their freedom and enjoy their civil rights as provided for by the constitution (Linlelater, 2000). Second, democratic space should be expanded in Libya. The widespread political opposition will only stop if the citizens are given an opportunity to express their political opinions.

Besides, the citizens' political opinions must be honored in order to ensure stability (Mittelman, 2011). This means that the citizens must be given an opportunity to elect their leaders directly. In order to ensure credibility of the elections, the voting process should be facilitated by an independent body.

Third, significant reforms are required in the government. Key aspects of the government such as the judiciary and the legislature should be empowered in order to achieve their purposes. The various branches of the government must have clearly defined responsibilities and the autonomy to execute their duties in order to maintain their effectiveness. The citizens' concerns such as lack of freedom and political oppression can be addressed if the government has well developed institutions and frameworks that facilitate social and political change (Peters, 2006). Finally, economic reforms are needed in the country. Even though the quality of life is high, the rate of economic growth is still low and the distribution of resources is not efficient. This is attributed <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-gaddafi-he-has-ignored-the-countrys-constitution/>

to the inefficiency of the socialist government in promoting economic activities in the country.

Thus the government's involvement in the economy should be minimized. This will help in improving efficiency in distribution of resources. Besides, it will facilitate rapid economic growth.

Steps I would take to Change the Country

As Libya's leader, I would address the above mentioned problems as follows. In order to implement political reforms, I would restructure the government. I would abolish the revolution sector and its veto power over the constitution and all other branches of the government. The executive branch of my government would consist of an elected president, a vice president and a cabinet of qualified professionals. I would establish an independent judicial system. This would involve eliminating the revolution court and replacing it with the Supreme Court as the highest court in the country.

The judges would be approved by the legislature before being appointed in order to prevent corruption and nepotism (Weber, 2009). An independent and effective judicial system will help in protecting the rights and freedom of the citizens (Roskin, 2006). I would also establish a legislative branch that is directly elected by the citizens instead of congressional representatives. This would help in improving democracy since the citizens' decisions on leadership will be implemented through their vote. I would facilitate the formation of political parties and introduce regular national elections conducted by an independent body. I would abolish the Green Book and amend the current constitution in order to incorporate the views and political

concerns of the citizens. The legislature would be responsible for the formulation and interpretation of laws. This would help in protecting the rights of the citizens (Mittelman, 2011).

My economic reforms would involve limiting government's role in the economy to regulation, enforcing law and order and protecting the citizens from potential exploitations by the producers in order to improve efficiency. However, I would maintain subsidies especially in education and healthcare sectors in order to improve the welfare of the population (Roskin, 2006).

Finally, I would focus on integrating the country with the rest of the world by establishing political ties with most countries. This will not only help in changing the world's perception of Libya, but will also open up business opportunities for the country (Weber, 2009).

Deployment of Resources

I would adopt a hybrid system to facilitate efficient distribution of resources. This means that I would adopt the concepts of both socialism and capitalism in order to achieve equality and rapid economic growth. My decision is based on the following reasons.

First, the current socialist system facilitates corruption and nepotism in resource distribution (Bruce, 2009). Second, it has succeeded in promoting equality but has failed to enhance rapid economic growth. Third, a capitalist system would encourage inequality since the poor will not be able to access most services such healthcare and education.

However, it would encourage rapid economic growth through "profit maximization, competition and freedom of choice" (Salvatore & Diulio, <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-gaddafi-he-has-ignored-the-countrys-constitution/>)

2003). Therefore, a hybrid system would be better since it maximizes the benefits of both capitalism and socialism while minimizing the demerits associated with them. In order to achieve the above objectives, I would establish a free market system that encourages private ownership of property (Salvatore & Diulio, 2003). This would be supported by appropriate legislations that provide a framework for its operation. Public enterprises would be privatized in order to promote efficiency (Frank, Bernanke, & Kaufman, 2007). Besides, profit remittance by such companies would be replaced by profit taxations. The government's role in the economy would be to ensure healthy competition, protecting private property and rights of citizens as well as enforcing law and order. Key sectors of the economy such as healthcare, education and security will be controlled by the government through subsidies, regulation and direct delivery or provision of services.

However, the private sector too would be allowed to participate in such sectors. The free market system would enable the government to realize high tax revenues which would be used for national projects such as development of infrastructure.

Type of Leader

I would like to be a president whose leadership is based on democracy and the rule of the law. This means that my focus would be on promoting democracy in the country. Upholding democracy will help in engaging the population in the affairs of the government (Swart & Solomon, 2008).

Consequently, my government will be people centered. A government that focuses on the needs of the people is likely to gain public approval which translates into political stability (Linlelater, 2000).

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Besides, it will help me to achieve rapid political change and economic growth since my objectives will be informed by the felt needs of the citizens. I will promote the rule of the law by ensuring that the constitution forms the basis of the operations of the government. Respecting the constitution will help in achieving the overall objectives and goals of the country (Roskin, 2006). My priorities will include promoting rapid economic growth, enhancing democracy and improving the relationship of Libya with the international community.

Assistance from Foreign Powers

Due to the scope of the political, social and economic reforms needed in the country, I would seek the following forms of assistance from foreign powers. To begin with, I would seek expert advice from the foreign powers in regard to restructuring the government. This is because the current system of governance needs a complete overhaul (Swart & Solomon, 2008). Thus replacing it with a new one will require a lot of expertise that Libya does not have (Bruce, 2009). Second, I would seek financial support from foreign powers. Implementing reforms such as restructuring the government and the economy requires a lot of financial resources.

For example, establishing new branches of the government such as the legislature and amending the constitution will necessitate spending on a lot of research, civic education and referendum (Weber, 2009). The current budget can not support all these reforms since a better part of it is used to provide services to the citizens (John, 2009). Therefore, I would need financial assistance either in the form of loans or grants from foreign powers.

The western powers in particular are likely to offer such support if they are

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promised that it will be used for political reforms. Finally, I would seek technological support from foreign powers in order to achieve rapid economic growth. At the moment the manufacturing sector in Libya “accounts for 20% of the real GDP” (John, 2009). However, the full potential of the sector can not be realized due to lack of appropriate technology. I would thus adopt an open market policy to encourage the foreign powers to invest in the country (Salvatore & Diulio, 2003).

Such investments will facilitate technological transfers into the country. Besides, I would seek financial support in the form of grants to facilitate research and development in Libya.

Conclusion

The above discussion indicates that Libya has a fairly stable economy and better quality of life as compared to other African countries (Bruce, 2009). However, the political and governance system in the country has failed to achieve its mandate (Daoud, 2011). There is no democracy and formal governance system. The country’s leader has abandoned the constitution and introduced his own political ideologies that enable him to extend his stay in office.

Consequently, he has been able to influence all aspects of the government and avert political opposition. The implication of these trends is that the level of political oppression has increased in the country (Hillston, 2011).

Consequently, the discontent that has been building up in the country recently degenerated into political unrest (Hillston, 2011). Thus in order to restore peace and stability in the country, the government must implement

political, social and economic reforms. Such reforms would include strengthening the various branches of the government, restoring the supremacy of the constitution and promoting democracy through elections.

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