

demics studying the Middle East. In present times, the Arab states' utilization of oil as a weapon in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has waned in significance. Meanwhile, Israel con-

tinues to carry out attacks against Palestine, largely without substantial reactions from the Arab states, actions that some perceive as amounting to genocide.

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## The EU, NATO, and the Libya Conflict: Anatomy of a Failure

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By Stefano Marcuzzi

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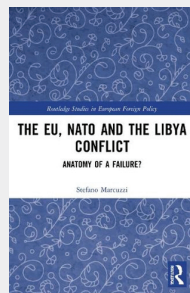
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In *The EU, NATO, and The Libya Conflict: Anatomy of a Failure*, Stefano Marcuzzi offers a well-researched and comprehensive analysis of the international intervention in Libya, focusing on the roles played by the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Marcuzzi, an international relations and security studies expert, currently serves as a Marie Curie Fellow at University College Dublin, Ireland. He is also a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe in Brussels, Belgium, and an analyst at the NATO Defense College Foundation in Rome, Italy. With a strong academic background and extensive experience in analyzing global security issues, Marcuzzi has contributed significantly to understanding international interventions, particularly in Libya.

Marcuzzi analyzes the complexities and shortcomings of the intervention, presenting a narrative highlighting the dynamics and missed opportunities that characterized the response to the Libyan crisis. This book contends that the failure originated from two primary issues shared by both organizations:



a greater “emphasis on legitimacy” over strategic planning and a reliance on existing methods (“path dependence”) without sufficient adaptation to the unique demands of the crisis (p. 5). Within a comprehensive analysis of official documents and extensive interviews with EU, NATO, UN, national government officials, military personnel, Libyan institutions, civil society, and media representatives, the book brings to light the perspectives of Libyan (ex) officials and experts from abovementioned institutions. It exposes how misguided assumptions and divergent interests within the EU and NATO hindered their efforts and how hard power’s ineffective and imprudent application in an increasingly multifaceted environment further aggravated the crisis. He defines this issue with “NATO and the EU, the overarching dilemma was why and how to use hard power in the fast-changing Libyan crisis” (p. 2).

Marcuzzi’s work is both timely and essential, providing a critical examination of a conflict that has had implications for regional stability and international security. The book is structured into well-defined sections that

methodically explore the chronological unfolding of events, the decision-making processes, and the strategic miscalculations that led to what Marcuzzi terms a “failure” of the international community’s efforts in Libya (p. 157). In this regard, the book mainly comprises of two sections: ‘responsibility to protect’ and ‘responsibility to rebuild.’ By examining the international community’s intervention under the pretext of protecting civilians and the strategic and political dynamics involved in the conflict, the first section focuses on the 2011 war in Libya. As an extension of the first section, the second section explores the aftermath of the 2011 war, analyzing the challenges and efforts related to post-conflict reconstruction, stabilization, and the long-term impacts on Libyan society and governance.

One of the book’s primary strengths lies in its detailed account of the pre-intervention period, where Marcuzzi outlines the internal political dynamics of Libya under Muammar Gaddafi’s rule. He provides a nuanced understanding of the sociopolitical landscape, which sets the stage for the subsequent international intervention. He defines this atmosphere with the widespread quote, ‘accidental state’ (p. 35). According to Marcuzzi, Libya’s fragmentation results from its geographic features, social fabric, and external interventions.

The book’s core analysis revolves around the abilities and inabilities of the EU and NATO. Marcuzzi critiques the EU’s fragmented approach, characterized by internal divisions and a lack of coherent strategy. He argues that the EU’s failure to present a united front undermined its ability to influence the course of the conflict effectively. According to Marcuzzi, this fragmentation was not just a result of differing national interests but also a re-

flection of deeper structural issues within the EU’s foreign policy apparatus.

On the other hand, NATO’s role, as analyzed by Marcuzzi, is equally scrutinized. He provides an in-depth examination of Operation Unified Protector (March 2011), NATO’s military intervention aimed at enforcing UN Security Council Resolution 1973. While the operation successfully prevented an imminent massacre in Benghazi, Marcuzzi argues that NATO’s lack of a clear post-conflict strategy led to a power vacuum and subsequent chaos. He highlights the disconnect between military objectives and political outcomes, emphasizing that NATO’s limited mandate and the absence of a comprehensive peace-building plan were critical flaws. The main argument that summarizes the discrepancies between these areas is in the introduction of the book; “no reform in either of these fields was possible because the country lacked an acceptable degree of security” (p. 131).

Marcuzzi also delves into the interplay between the EU and NATO, highlighting the challenges of coordination and cooperation between these two major international actors. He discusses the concept of “strategic autonomy” within the EU and how the Libya conflict exposed the limitations of this ambition (p. 65). The analysis reveals a troubling disconnect between the political rhetoric of European leaders and the operational realities on the ground. It also showcases the difficulties in translating strategic goals into effective action.

The author’s critique extends to the broader international community, including the U.S. Marcuzzi argues that the U.S. fell short in its cooperation with NATO and the EU, which diminished the effectiveness of the operation. Additionally, he criticizes the lack of a

long-term strategy in the U.S. intervention in Libya. Thirdly, Marcuzzi suggests that the U.S. was inadequate in terms of intelligence and information sharing during its intervention in Libya. And finally, he critiques the U.S. for focusing predominantly on military solutions and failing to sufficiently explore diplomatic and political avenues. He notes that this approach exacerbated the instability in Libya rather than contributing to its long-term stability.

In general terms, Marcuzzi argues that the intervention was marred by conflicting agendas and a lack of a unified vision for Libya's future. He suggests that the failure to establish a coherent and inclusive post-conflict framework was a significant factor in the country's descent into prolonged instability and civil war.

One of the most commendable aspects of Marcuzzi's book is his balanced approach. While he is critical of the intervention's failures, he also acknowledges the situation's complexity and the genuine challenges policymakers face. His analysis is grounded in a thorough understanding of international relations theory, but it is also enriched by em-

pirical evidence and firsthand accounts from key stakeholders involved in the conflict.

*The EU, NATO, and The Libya Conflict: Anatomy of a Failure* is not just a critique but also a call to action. Marcuzzi concludes with recommendations for future international interventions, emphasizing the need for greater coherence, strategic foresight, and an integrated approach that combines military and diplomatic efforts. He advocates for a more robust and united EU foreign policy and a reevaluation of NATO's strategic priorities to better align with the realities of modern conflicts.

Stefano Marcuzzi's book is essential for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in understanding the intricacies of international interventions and the challenges of conflict resolution. His detailed analysis and thoughtful insights contribute to the discourse on the EU and NATO's roles in global security. *The EU, NATO, and The Libya Conflict: Anatomy of a Failure* serves as a poignant reminder of the complexities of international diplomacy and the importance of learning from past mistakes to build a more stable and secure world.