

# Strange Bedfellows: Why France's Emmanuel Macron and His Autocratic Friends Are Attempting to Impose Another Strongman in the MENA Region

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**ABSTRACT** *France has lately edged ever closer to a number of autocracies in Africa and the Middle East. Notably, in the name of combating “Islamic terrorism” –which it links to “political Islam”– it has actively supported Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar. While actively allying with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, and Saudi Arabia; it has aggressively confronted Turkey and undermined the internationally recognized Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA). In doing so, France finds itself in the same camp as Russian and Janjaweed mercenaries. Since France, in theory, supports the GNA and since Turkey has been sheltering millions of refugees that otherwise would flood Europe, this hostility is hard to comprehend. The present commentary will seek to examine the premises of this policy and what may be behind its actions.*

**Keywords:** Libya, France, Haftar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Arms Sales, Refugees, Feminist Foreign Policy

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## Introduction: The Legacy of Muammar Qaddafi and the Damage Done by His Would-be Successor

Muammar Qaddafi ruled Libya (badly) with an iron fist for 42 years, creating a grotesque system of governance that combined personality cult, Islam, and communist political structures. The result was a degradation of good citizenship and rotten institutions –especially the security services. Despite the nostalgia that French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian has for Qaddafi,<sup>1</sup> globalization and advances in communication meant it was inevitable that Libyans, fed up with his 42 years of brutality and oppression,<sup>2</sup> would rise up. When Qaddafi launched a campaign to slaughter the people of Benghazi, it was France under President Nicholas Sarkozy –despite his previous insouciance and economic interests– who took the first concrete steps to stop it.<sup>3</sup> Libyan appreciation for France’s role was evident in the large notice board that greeted travelers arriving at Benghazi airport.

Unfortunately, as then U.S. President Barack Obama<sup>4</sup> and the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee<sup>5</sup> noted, the international community failed to appreciate the urgency of Libya’s plight and allocate the necessary resources to bring stability to Libya after the Revolution and the situation deteriorated.

Khalifa Haftar was an officer in King Idris’ army and had been a commander under Qaddafi from the

time he seized power in 1969. After Haftar was defeated by French forces in Chad in 1989, Qaddafi disowned him and he was taken over by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an agent in their conflict with Qaddafi.<sup>6</sup> Returning from exile in the United States in 2011, he wanted to command the revolutionary forces, but could only get Commander of the land forces<sup>7</sup> (effectively the third highest post). In February 2014, he called for suspension of the General National Congress and the government in a failed coup attempt.<sup>8</sup> He then led a coalition of army units, former revolutionary groups and tribal militias calling themselves the “Libyan National Army”<sup>9</sup> (LNA) in a series of attacks, presented as Operation *Karama* (Dignity), against not only the radical group Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi but also officially recognized units, funded and nominally under the command of the Chief of General Staff. While claiming to serve the government based in Tobruk, Haftar has established a kind of military mini-state where he is the supreme authority and where rights and freedoms have gradually diminished.

With the Libyan Political Agreement negotiated by the UN on December 17, 2015, a Government of National Accord (GNA) was formed, recognized by the entire international community including all of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Haftar did everything he could to prevent its implementation. The chaos that followed gave the so-

called “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)”<sup>10</sup> an opportunity to gain a foothold, especially in Sirte.<sup>11</sup> Haftar defeated the extremist group Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi, while destroying much of the city. He used this as his calling card to portray himself the “great fighter of the Islamic terrorists,”<sup>12</sup> yet others fought the greatest battles. Local Salafists drove ISIS from Derna in 2015<sup>13</sup> and then routed it from Sabratha along with other anti-Haftar elements and the help of U.S. airstrikes.<sup>14</sup> The battle for Sirte was won by the GNA’s *Bunyan Marsous* (“Solid Wall”) operation –composed mainly of fighters from Misrata and small contingents from other towns– supported by U.S. and UK intelligence and logistics,<sup>15</sup> special forces and air support.<sup>16</sup> Six hundred and fifty GNA fighters gave their lives and 2,000 were wounded.<sup>17</sup> While GNA forces fought ISIS, Haftar took control of the oil fields and bought the loyalty of certain tribal militias in the south. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) continued to mediate and a national conference was scheduled for April 2019.<sup>18</sup> A few days before it was to start, Haftar launched a major offensive on Tripoli. One year later, UNSMIL described the impact of this offensive:<sup>19</sup>

### **Humanitarian Situation Deteriorated to Unprecedented Levels**

- At least 685 civilian casualties (356 deaths and 329 injured)
- 149,000 people in and around Tripoli forced to flee their homes

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- Over 345,000 civilians remain in frontline areas
- Additional 749,000 people in areas affected by the clashes
- 893,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance
- Appalling impact in terms of damage to and destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and detention facilities
- Human rights violations have exponentially increased with attacks against human rights defenders and journalists, doctors, lawyers and judges, migrants and refugees, and deteriorating conditions of detention.

### **Economic Collapse**

- Over 100 billion Libyan Dinars (LYD) in domestically held debt (\$73.4 billion)
- Another \$1 billion credit lines for domestic fuel imports
- LYD 169 billion (\$124.1 billion) outstanding contractual obligations

## Sheikh al-Madkhali is strongly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood. Many of Haftar's Libyan fighters subscribe to this doctrine and have a history of enforcing ever stricter social mores when they take over a region

- Oil blockade imposed January 17, 2020 already resulted in financial losses exceeding \$4 billion
- Spending diverted to war effort destroying rather than building critical infrastructure
- Two separate central banks prevented monetary or fiscal policy reform and contributed to a domestic banking crisis.

All of the above problems have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>20</sup>

Haftar's French-backed campaign caused more hardships for women and children, as well as a higher likelihood of sexual violence.<sup>21</sup> Member of Parliament Siham Sergewa was kidnapped from her home in Benghazi by an armed group<sup>22</sup> and we still have no news of her fate.<sup>23</sup> On April 27, 2020 –following another 248 civilian casualties largely due to his forces– Haftar claimed to have a mandate to take over all government in Libya, removing whatever small legitimacy he had claimed from his

association with the House of Representatives.<sup>24</sup>

### The Friends of Haftar Club

The Macron government appears to have a fear of Islam. It recently instigated a controversial campaign at home against “Islamic separatism.”<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, in their foreign campaign against “Islamic terrorism”<sup>26</sup> and “political Islam,”<sup>27</sup> Macron and Le Drian have taken up with some odd bedfellows, starting with the regional autocracies: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE.<sup>28</sup> They seem an odd fit with Macron's supposed “feminist foreign policy.”

#### Saudi Arabia

Under Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has gone from being a calming force in the region to a destabilizer. Its legal system is based on Sharia law. In 2018, the regime murdered a journalist abroad<sup>29</sup> and has developed a very bad reputation for human rights,<sup>30</sup> despite expensive efforts to whitewash its reputation.<sup>31</sup> Saudi interests have bought into newspapers owned by Russian oligarch and former KGB<sup>32</sup> officer Alexander Lebedev and his son Evgeny, which include the *London Evening Standard* and the *Independent*.<sup>33</sup> Alexander is sometimes critical of the Russian government but has also provided support for controversial moves like the annexation of Crimea.<sup>34</sup> Women are required to cover themselves completely. Despite now having the right to drive, those who had petitioned for this right have gone to



jail, including a royal princess.<sup>35</sup> In protest of Saudi Arabia's treatment of women and other human rights abuses, activists have discouraged governments from attending a November 2020 G20 summit hosted by Saudi Arabia.<sup>36</sup> Following the problems caused by al-Qaida<sup>37</sup> abroad and at home, some of the country's leadership started supporting a different strain of conservative (quietist) Sunni Islam with less potential to be a threat to the regime than the classic Wahabi school. One of Saudi Arabia's main contributions to Haftar has been the ideological support of the Madkhali Salafists.<sup>38</sup> While still preaching extremely conservative Islam, this line of thought also says not to question secular leaders, a very convenient notion for princes and strongmen.

Sheikh al-Madkhali is strongly opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>39</sup> Many of Haftar's Libyan fighters subscribe to this doctrine and have a history of enforcing ever stricter social mores when they take over a region.<sup>40</sup>

They also have followers among the GNA, causing some to fear a "5<sup>th</sup> Column" that could join Haftar or form another ultra-conservative regime.<sup>41</sup> Besides ideology, Saudi Arabia has helped Haftar by lobbying Washington,<sup>42</sup> financing,<sup>43</sup> and possibly paying for Russian mercenaries.<sup>44</sup> Both the U.S. Congress<sup>45</sup> and the European Parliament have pushed to block arms sales to the Kingdom.<sup>46</sup> In 2019, a UK Court of Appeal ruled arms sales to Saudi Arabia illegal because the British Government had not adequately considered accusations of violations of international humanitarian law.<sup>47</sup> As the UK seeks to renew sales, activists are again taking the case to court.<sup>48</sup>

### **The UAE**

The UAE is Saudi Arabia's main ally in the brutal Yemen conflict that has displaced 6.65 million and put 24.3 million people in need.<sup>49</sup> Though more modern than Saudi Arabia, *Sharia* remains an important source of law. For example, women who

A woman holds a placard reading in French "Thank you very much France" during a rally calling for the imposition of a no-fly zone in Benghazi in Eastern Libya on March 12, 2011. By contrast 8 years later in Western Libya, a message rejecting French President Macron is displayed during a demonstration with yellow vests against strongman Khalifa Haftar in Tripoli on April 19, 2019. Getty Images

**With the help of his backers and former Qaddafi officers, Haftar has recruited thousands of African mercenaries, including Janjaweed and diverse paramilitary and rebel groups, offering \$ 3,000 plus vehicles and plunder**

have extra-marital relationships go to jail. Currently, there are reported to be a number of foreign female workers stuck in the UAE for this reason: the prisons will not take them because of COVID-19 but they are not allowed to leave until they serve their sentence. In the meantime, they and their children are in a precarious situation.<sup>50</sup> However, it is not only poor women who have issues. A UK family court judgement found that that the emir of Dubai (also Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE) orchestrated the abductions of two of his daughters and subjected his youngest wife to a campaign of “intimidation.”<sup>51</sup> Though the UAE provided little help to Libya after the Revolution, it has been accused of arming Tubu tribal militias in the south since 2012.<sup>52</sup> An early and important backer of Haftar’s attempt to seize power, the UAE furnished financing and weapons and even carried out attacks using its own forces and weapons systems.<sup>53</sup> It also paid for a number of mercenary forces to assist.<sup>54</sup> Like Saudi Arabia,

the UAE used its lobbying prowess to assist Haftar with the Trump Administration<sup>55</sup> and attempted to control media in Libya.<sup>56</sup> It deeply compromised the credibility of the United Nations by secretly hiring Bernardino León, the head of UNSMIL, as the highly remunerated director of its diplomatic academy while he was still leading negotiations.<sup>57</sup> There are members of the U.S. Congress who feel the U.S. should cut off arms sales.<sup>58</sup>

### ***Egypt***

Egypt is still a fairly conservative country where *Sharia* remains an important source of law.<sup>59</sup> Recently, President el-Sisi has attempted to exert more control over religious authorities to serve his own interests.<sup>60</sup> As head of the armed forces, he seized power in a coup against democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood following the Arab Spring.<sup>61</sup> Some evidence purports to show that the UAE helped.<sup>62</sup> A week after the coup, the UAE and Saudi Arabia gave \$8 billion to the new regime<sup>63</sup> and have continued to provide substantial financing ever since.<sup>64</sup> Much of this has helped pay for a massive increase in weapons purchases from France, which will be discussed in greater detail below. This financing has not been without cost, since Egypt’s funders have expected to exercise a certain control over its affairs.<sup>65</sup> Egypt gave two islands to Saudi Arabia<sup>66</sup> and used its influence to block a motion to have the Saudi branch of ISIS added to a UN list of terrorist groups.<sup>67</sup> Under

President el-Sisi's leadership, Egypt has enthusiastically supported Haftar with weapons, air strikes, and fuel smuggling despite theoretically supporting the GNA.<sup>68</sup> While paying lip service to peace negotiations, Egyptian materiel was simultaneously reported as on its way to Haftar when he began his assault days before the national dialogue was to begin<sup>69</sup> and it also lobbied the Trump Administration on Haftar's behalf.<sup>70</sup> While some of its air strikes purported to strike ISIS in response to attacks on Egyptian Coptic Christians living in Libya, they actually hit Libyan Salafists unrelated to the attacks but opposed to Haftar –the very ones who had forced ISIS out of Derna.<sup>71</sup> Egypt's bad human rights record has not stopped France from cozying up to it,<sup>72</sup> but it has led to calls by many in the U.S. to slash military aid after an American citizen was killed in prison there.<sup>73</sup>

### **Russia**

Egypt has also been accused of housing Russian Special Forces<sup>74</sup> and possibly other support elements aiding Haftar's campaign. From the beginning, Russia has tried to pretend to be neutral while providing material support for Haftar in the form of weapons systems, printing bank notes, and diplomatic cover.<sup>75</sup> When Haftar's offensive on Tripoli stalled, reports appeared of 1,200 Russian mercenaries<sup>76</sup> working for the Wagner Group, providing critical skills and eventually provoking Turkey's direct military engagement.<sup>77</sup> These are similar to the fighters Russia sent to eastern Ukraine.<sup>78</sup> Like the MENA

autocracies, Moscow did not want a liberal democracy on its doorstep. In Libya, they have been accused of indiscriminately planting land mines leading to unnecessary civilian casualties.<sup>79</sup> Russia is also alleged to have provided technicians, aircraft<sup>80</sup> and air defense<sup>81</sup> to support the Wagner mercenaries. This ally regularly conducts cyber-attacks in Europe and the rest of the world<sup>82</sup> and is accused of trying to assassinate its critics,<sup>83</sup> including women.<sup>84</sup>

### ***Ethnic Mercenaries***

With the help of his backers and former Qaddafi officers, Haftar has recruited thousands of African mercenaries, including Janjaweed and diverse paramilitary and rebel groups, offering \$ 3,000 plus vehicles and plunder.<sup>85</sup> To a lesser extent, the GNA and/or other anti-Haftar groups have recruited some of their own fighters, mostly from Tubu groups along the border –but at times they are alleged to have tried to buy off some of Haftar's mercenaries.<sup>86</sup> The Chadians and Sudanese are reputed to be good desert fighters: cheaper and more willing to work away from home. Besides money, they may have other motives like supporting their ethnic kin, trafficking, theft and other commercial interests.<sup>87</sup> Groups have supported several factions as the situation or their motivations shifted.<sup>88</sup> Brutal attacks by Haftar's forces on Tubu communities have been particularly motivating.<sup>89</sup> The presence of these mercenaries not only helps sustain the Libyan conflict, it also destabilizes the region, which in turn creates more refugees.<sup>90</sup> Libyans of

Egyptian President el-Sisi poses with French President Macron, prior to their bilateral meeting in the annual G7 Summit in Biarritz, South-West France, August 26, 2019.

FRANCOIS MORI / Getty Images



the same ethnicity as the mercenaries risk finding themselves identified as foreign fighters.

### **“La France Perfide?”**

While Macron rails against Turkey for supporting the internationally recognized government of Libya against a rogue warlord accused of crimes against humanity, France has been actively assisting Haftar with special forces since at least early 2016.<sup>91</sup> According to Haftar himself, “France helped (his cause) like no other country...providing information, military reconnaissance and security experts, which helped a lot.”<sup>92</sup> Previously unacknowledged, this became overt when three French commandos were killed in July of 2016.<sup>93</sup> The French advisers were accompanying Haftar forces fighting the local groups combating

ISIS. Their presence already indicated to many in the international community that France was keen to undermine the internationally recognized government in favor of a warlord. Apparently, mounting attacks against those actually fighting against ISIS is part of Macron’s surreal anti-terrorist strategy. Under the direction of France’s Directorate-General for External Security<sup>94</sup> (DGSE), France has also employed mercenary outfits to aid Haftar with tasks such as crucial intelligence gathering,<sup>95</sup> notably against the local Islamists who drove ISIS out of Derna.<sup>96</sup> At the same time that France was assisting Haftar, the French-led Operation *Barkhane* has been accused by the UN Panel of Experts of refusing to share information with them.<sup>97</sup> In 2019, U.S. Javelin missiles sold to France for use in Afghanistan were found in a Haftar camp captured by the GNA.<sup>98</sup>

An interview with Macron's Foreign Minister Le Drian after Haftar launched his offensive on Tripoli makes clear that the French government had no interest in a political solution.<sup>99</sup> Macron has also used France's important positions in international organizations to shelter Haftar and stymie political discussions that might allow Libya to get out of its crisis in a more peaceful and sustainable way. In April 2019, France blocked an EU statement<sup>100</sup> condemning Haftar's assault and teamed up with Russia to block a resolution calling for a ceasefire at the UN Security Council.<sup>101</sup> There has also been controversy over the EU's "Operation Irini" (*Eunavfor Med Irini*) in the Mediterranean, which seeks to block weapons delivery by sea to Libya (i.e. mostly those going to the GNA) while doing nothing about all those shipped by its clients to Haftar by air or via Egypt.<sup>102</sup> Related to that, there was an issue at NATO when France accused a Turkish frigate of harassing a French one trying to intercept a ship possibly carrying weapons to the GNA. Though the official NATO report was inconclusive, France quit Operation Sea Guardian in protest.<sup>103</sup>

### **Refugees**

One of President Macron's reasons for supporting Haftar is that he believes the strongman will stop a flood of refugees washing up on the shores of the European Union. In this context, his hostility toward Turkey can only be explained as the complex of one who resents the person who does them a favor. Turkey is by far

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the country housing the world's largest refugee population, 3.6 million of whom are Syrians under temporary protection and close to 370,000 of which are refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities.<sup>104</sup> This is more than all the refugee populations of European Union member states combined (2,591,349).<sup>105</sup> Among Macron's autocratic friends: Egypt hosts about 258,816,<sup>106</sup> the UAE 1,247<sup>107</sup> and Saudi Arabia 320.<sup>108</sup> Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow some workers to continue their stay.<sup>109</sup> France itself hosts around 407,923 refugees.<sup>110</sup>

### **Blood Money**

What else can explain Macron and Le Drian's obsession with supporting Haftar? The most obvious and quantifiable explanation is the increasingly large number of weapons that France sells to autocracies in the MENA region. Given the misery, economic damage and ensuing flow of refugees that these have been causing, one might be forgiven for thinking this a short-sighted approach. However, one can understand the "*après moi le déluge*" attitude (i.e. a problem for

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the next guy) since other major arms exporters exhibit a similar approach. Not only do these sales bring in billions worth of profits, they also help pay for the fixed costs of developing weapons systems for one's own national security forces and mean that a country is less dependent on the goodwill of a foreign supplier. During the Cold War, there was more coordination between NATO allies about what to sell to certain countries, but subsequently, national commercial interests have predominated.<sup>111</sup> They rarely worry that these arms could be used against them. Libya is a case in point. After France sold Mirages to the Qaddafi regime in the early Seventies, it ended up fighting several wars against it in the eighties in support of Chad –where Haftar was the losing Libyan commander, no less.

Table 1, taken from Annex 9 of the official government report on French arms exports from 2010-2019,<sup>112</sup> gives probably the most substantive and convincing reason behind France's recent enthusiasm for Haftar and

his autocratic backers. The Near and Middle East represents almost half of France's total arms sales, which have been increasing exponentially over the last ten years. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are all among France's biggest clients, each individually bigger than most other regions. The only other countries in the same league are India and Qatar. To further illustrate, Egypt and Saudi Arabia both bought more weapons from France last year than the rest of the European Union combined. Whether it wants to admit it or not, France has a powerful motivation to adopt the point of view of these important customers, which already feeds into some of its biases. If arms sales generate more chaos, then that will create more demand. The Macron government may even be tempted to throw in other services like training, information gathering, intelligence and the use of its vote in the Security Council and the EU. In 2009, France built its first new foreign base since the colonial period in Abu Dhabi, ostensibly to extend its strategic reach but also to help sell more weapons.<sup>113</sup> Of course, the more France invests in this strategy, the more it will be tempted to double down, even when this may be a losing proposition. If Haftar wins, then it feels its oil investments will be secure and Haftar has promised big contracts for infrastructure<sup>114</sup> plus, undoubtedly, more weapons sales. If its "champion" loses, then France risks being frozen out, though it might hope that the regional autocracies would remember its efforts when making weapons purchases and other contracts.

**Table 1: Details of Equipment Delivered Since 2010 by Country and Regional Breakdown (in Millions of Current €, 2010-2019)**

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Saudi Arabia	697.6	380.5	418.9	418.6	643.7	899.8	1,085.8	1,381.6	1,398.8	1,379.5	8,704.8
Bahrain	9.8	26.8	76.7	3.0	0.9	3.1	3.4	1.5	2.0	0.1	127.2
Egypt	39.6	9.8	27.5	63.6	103.0	1,240.2	1,329.6	1,478.2	1,276.3	1,029.3	6,597.1
United Arab Emirates	257.9	271.1	185.8	274.0	126.8	293.6	399.9	226.8	237.0	287.2	2,560.1
Iraq	2.9	0.6	0.2	0.9	3.7	12.1	0.1	8.2	17.0	0.1	45.8
Israel	35.2	20.5	11.0	15.0	14.0	19.5	30.2	18.1	22.1	22.7	208.3
Jordan	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.6	1.0	2.7	3.6	0.6	12.9
Kuwait	41.3	11.0	8.7	9.4	9.5	8.6	9.3	119.4	66.0	277.2	560.4
Lebanon	0.6	1.5	0.4	9.2	9.7	3.0	0.3	3.5	3.0	0.5	31.6
Oman	221.1	123.1	222.9	110.1	85.6	32.0	90.1	105.4	29.8	43.7	1,063.9
Qatar	36.9	37.0	122.7	20.3	46.5	134.7	116.1	137.2	164.3	3,330.6	4,146.2
Yemen	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
<b>Total Near and Middle East</b>	<b>1,344.5</b>	<b>882.6</b>	<b>1,075.6</b>	<b>924.7</b>	<b>1,043.8</b>	<b>2,648.3</b>	<b>3,065.5</b>	<b>3,482.6</b>	<b>3,219.9</b>	<b>6,371.6</b>	<b>24,059.1</b>
<b>Total North-East Asia</b>	137.3	153.8	168.6	222.1	194.1	204.6	229.2	219.2	244.5	260.2	2,033.5
<b>Total Central Asia</b>	8.6	5.3	7.6	33.5	1.9	211.6	158.4	19.5	90.2	24.0	560.6
<b>Total South Asia</b>	374.3	298.1	284.0	454.4	511.7	1,139.5	1,046.9	764.5	707.6	845.2	6,426.3
<b>Total South-East Asia</b>	190.1	130.8	369.8	488.6	263.9	456.1	419.5	392.7	552.3	316.0	3,579.9
<b>Total North America</b>	203.6	317.2	115.6	166.0	170.2	146.4	163.1	181.2	252.9	480.6	2,196.9
<b>Total Central America and Caribbean</b>	30.7	55.1	206.4	58.7	112.2	3.2	33.5	93.6	69.0	0.9	663.1
<b>Total South America</b>	133.7	180.6	206.3	512.3	148.2	191.5	416.3	407.5	521.4	362.5	3,080.4
<b>Total North Africa</b>	307.9	240.5	40.3	57.3	495.2	54.1	245.5	102.5	174.9	125.2	1,843.4
<b>Total Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	53.5	125.2	29.2	67.4	33.1	62.0	90.8	50.6	146.3	261.3	919.4
<b>Total Oceania</b>	158.5	223.8	225.8	111.4	155.8	140.6	187.7	70.1	86.7	107.9	1,468.4
<b>Total Other European Countries</b>	157.1	188.4	153.5	167.5	135.9	216.1	145.4	171.4	170.1	112.6	1,618.1
<b>Total European Union</b>	604.0	845.9	461.5	516.9	580.8	587.0	779.2	688.0	644.9	567.1	6,275.3
<b>Diverse (International Organization, Non-UN Member States)</b>	79.1	130.9	35.0	99.8	198.8	140.3	140.1	87.5	85.2	90.7	1,087.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,783.0</b>	<b>3,778.2</b>	<b>3,379.1</b>	<b>3,880.6</b>	<b>4,045.4</b>	<b>6,201.5</b>	<b>7,121.0</b>	<b>6,730.9</b>	<b>6,966.0</b>	<b>9,925.8</b>	<b>55,811.5</b>

Source: French Ministry of Armed Forces

Despite the criticisms of French arms sales to these countries by institutions like the European Parliament,<sup>115</sup> Amnesty International<sup>116</sup> and Human

Rights Watch,<sup>117</sup> President Macron probably feels that because he has a female defense minister in charge of these transactions (Florence Parly),

that they are consistent with a “feminist foreign policy.”

## Conclusion

France has based its fervent support for Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar in the name of fighting Islamic terrorism, which it conflates with political Islam. While claiming to pursue a “feminist foreign policy,” it has ignored the many crimes against humanity attributed to Haftar’s coalition and the repressive policies of his international backers. It also seeks to minimize the numbers of refugees coming to Europe. Though somehow resentful towards Turkey for hosting millions that might otherwise come to France, it seems oblivious to the way its own actions help create the conditions that produce refugees. Though the behavior of President Macron and his government may seem hypocritical and somewhat inspired by hysterical emotion, there are certain elements of commercial, short-term logic to it; notably, the sale of weapons. Unfortunately, besides the destruction of its credibility, France’s policies will likely cause harm not only to Africa and the Middle East, which they are doing already, but also to France and Europe. ■

## Endnotes

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his advance on Tripoli days before the Libyan peace conference was due to begin in April 2019. Though he did not officially endorse the offensive as such, in the phone call he had with Haftar, it was reported that Trump “recognised Field Marshal Haftar’s significant role in fighting terrorism and securing Libya’s oil resources, and the two discussed a shared vision for Libya’s transition to a stable, democratic political system.” See, “Trump Discussed ‘Shared Vision’ in Phone Call to Libyan Warlord Haftar,” *France 24*, (April 19, 2019).

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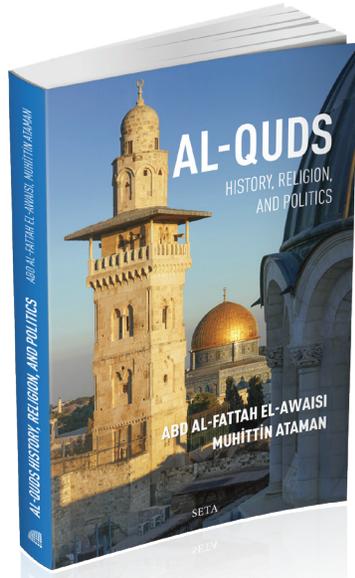
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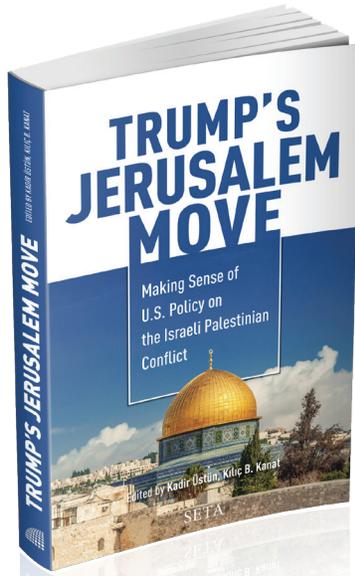
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## Al-Quds | History, Religion and Politics

September 2019 | Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi, Muhittin Ataman

*Considering the transformation process in the Middle East and the global transition, it is clear that the Palestinian-Israeli question and the issue of al-Quds will continue to dominate the agenda of the Middle East and global system. Recent regional developments such as Trump's decision regarding the future of Jerusalem and the solution proposal called the "Deal of Century" by the Trump Administration demonstrate that the holy city of al-Quds will continue.*



## Trump's Jerusalem Move

April 2020 | Kadir Üstün, Kılıç Buğra Kanat

*This critically important book includes chapters both contextualizing and discussing the U.S. administration's Jerusalem declaration in great detail. Various sections authored by American, Latin American, European, and Turkish authors examine the international responses to the U.S. President Trump's declaration.*