

## SHORT SPEECH

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### **THE LIBYAN SITUATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

On 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the Turkish President announced he would have sent some military troops in Libya to offer a logistic support to Al Serraj's government.

The escalation of the Libyan crisis is a matter of concern for European governments' agendas.

Naturally, historical determinants have to be analyzed to understand the current situation of this country.

It is known that in 2011 the Arab Springs caused the fall of lots of political regimes in Maghreb, Mashreq and Middle East. As a consequence, new political systems were established in that area. In Libya, for instance, uprisings in the East of the country spread in both the Tripolitanian and the Sirtic region very fast.

The former Libyan dictator, Colonel Gaddafi, refused to resign and rebels overthrew the regime. Subsequently, two governments took control of power in Libya in the East and the West respectively.

The UN searched for a common solution to create a unified government recognized by the whole Libyan people. However, UN attempts to obtain this goal failed, cause principally of the domestic divisions among Cyrenaic inhabitants, Tripolitanian ones and the clans living in the centre and South of the country.

In addition, a rising competition between the two Libyan leaders has characterised the recent history of this country becoming a reason of concern for Mediterranean Powers.

Naturally, geopolitical elements also come into play.

It is widely known that Libya is one of the main petroleum exporting countries in the Mediterranean Sea. Oil fields are mainly in the Tripolitanian region.

For this reason, the majority of Great Powers' governments recognized and sustained Al Serraj's leadership.

As a result, Libya has been transformed in a diplomatic battlefield of World Great Powers. From one hand, the East Libyan government installed in Benghazi has been strengthening its presence in this country.

It is now widely recognized that East Libyan military forces have been financed and supplied by a Russian society named “Wagner” whose CEO is linked to the Russian President. On the other hand, Al Serraj’s government required a logistic aid from the Turkish President. Afterwards, the Italian Prime Minister, Mr Giuseppe Conte, expressed its interest to open diplomatic negotiations to solve the Libyan crisis. It is recognized by political analysts that Italy has historically played a significant role in diplomatic and economic partnership with this country. As a matter of fact, Libya has a strategic role in the Italian diplomatic agenda for its energetic supplying. In fact, the pipeline named “Greenstream” links Tripoli to Sicily.

In 2008 the Italian government stipulated an agreement with Gaddafi. It established that ENI, one of the Italian most important energetic enterprises, could exploit Libyan oil in exchange for building the Coast highway linking Tripoli to Benghazi and other infrastructures.

After the Arab Spring, UN searched for a viable solution to Libyan crisis. Notwithstanding the above, lots of diplomatic attempts haven’t reached the goal.

Certainly, EU should play a fundamental role in supporting peace-keeping operations in Libya. However, European governments have been adopting different diplomatic strategies till now.

In addition, finding a solution to Libyan political crisis is also important to manage inflows towards Europe. As a matter of fact, the majority of migrants arrive to Libya before embarking on barges.

The African Union may also have an important say in the matter together with UN.

All Great Powers, international organizations and EU should cooperate to promote the unification of the country by mediating among local politicians, clans and stakeholders and allocating financial resources to rebuild the infrastructures.

Finally, peace-making, peace-enforcement and peace-keeping actions have to be deployed as soon as possible and the stabilisation of the country is the only viable solution to avoid the risk of dangerous conflicts.

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\* Le considerazioni espresse dall’autore sono del tutto personali e non da attribuire al Seminario-SSIP in quanto tale.