



THE SELECTIVITY AND INCONSISTENCY OF SECURITY  
COUNCIL-AUTHORIZED HUMANITARIAN  
INTERVENTION: EXPLAINING SYRIA IN LIGHT OF LIBYA

By  
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# Research Puzzle

- Why do states apply the humanitarian intervention doctrine selectively and inconsistently?
- What explains the divergent approach of the international community to Libya and Syria?

# Research Question

- What factors or conditions influence the feasibility of Security Council-authorized humanitarian intervention?
- Why did the Security Council authorize intervention in Libya, but not in Syria?

# Intellectual Context

Theory	Explanation for Humanitarian Intervention
Realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Core material, economic, or strategic interests of the most powerful states</li><li>•Interventions happen in places where the most powerful states can advance their interests</li><li>•The futility of humanitarian norms and human rights discourse</li></ul>
Constructivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International norms</li><li>• Internalization of the humanitarian intervention norm</li></ul>
English School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Pluralists vs. Solidarists</li><li>•Responsibility to Protect Doctrine</li><li>•“R2P” Pessimists and Optimists</li></ul>

# The Argument/Thesis

- This thesis argues that the selectivity and inconsistency of humanitarian intervention in general, and Libya and Syria in particular, can be explained by the following four variables:
- 1.) The economic, military, and political relationship between the P5 and the target country
- 2.) The military strength and political cohesiveness of the incumbent regime
- 3.) The official stance of regional organizations and individual regional actors
- 4.) The experience of previous interventions, in this case the intervention in Libya

# Significance/So What? Who Cares?

- Theoretical Significance

- New theoretical model

- Challenges conventional approaches

- Practical Significance

- “Arab Spring”

- Humanitarian Intervention is a Matter of Life or Death

- Timeliness

# Research Design

## ➤ Methods

- Comparative case study
- Textual Analysis
- Process Tracing

## Sources

- Primary: UN documents, newspaper articles, resolutions of relevant regional organizations, official figures
- Secondary: journal articles, books, NGO reports

# Findings I

- The central importance of the P5
  
- Libya and Russia and China
  - Infrastructure
  - Energy
  - Arms
  
- Syria and Russia and China
  - Infrastructure
  - Energy
  - Arms



# Findings II

	LIBYA	SYRIA
Active Military Personnel	40,000	304,000
Active Military Reserves	0	450,500
Total Aircraft Strength	621	695
Total Helicopter Strength	120	176
Total Tank Strength	500	4,150
Total AFV Strength	2,500	7,945
Total SPG Strength	400	516
Total Artillery Strength	600	2,150
Total MLRS Strength	800	1,336
Total Navy Ship Strength	3	41
<b>Annual Defense Budget</b>	<b>\$880,000,000</b>	<b>\$2,500,000,000</b>

# Findings II

- Libya's Security Apparatus
  - Army weak and fragmented
  - The Revolutionary Committees (small and ill-equipped)
  - Major defections and the fall of Benghazi
  
- Syria's Security Apparatus
  - Military strong and a central pillar of the regime
  - Alawite control of the most important military, internal security, and intelligence units (up to 90%)

# Findings III-The Regional Context

## ➤ Libya and Relevant Regional Actors

- The League of Arab States (March 12 Declaration)
- The Gulf Cooperation Council (March 7 call for the enforcement of no-fly zone)
- The Organization of Islamic Conference (call for a no-fly zone)

## ➤ Syria and Relevant Regional Actors

- Regional Repercussions and Potential for Conflict Spill-Over
- No call for the enforcement of a no-fly zone
- Hezbollah and Iran (the “Axis of Resistance”)

# Findings IV-The Implications of the Libyan Intervention

- China and the Experience of Intervention in Libya
  - Civilian casualties
  - NATO's support for rebels and active involvement in regime change
  - “The original intention of Resolutions 1970 and 1973 was to put an end to violence and to protect civilians. There must be no attempt at regime change or involvement in civil war by any party under the guise of protecting civilians” (Chinese UN Ambassador Li Baodong)
- Russia and the Experience of Intervention in Libya
  - “The international community unfortunately did take sides in Libya and we would never allow the Security Council to authorize anything similar to what happened in Libya” (Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov)

# Implications

- Theoretical
  - Challenges existing explanations
  - New theoretical framework
  
- Policy
  - The futility of relying on number of deaths or the scale of human suffering
  - The importance of regional organizations
  - The importance of strictly abiding by the text of the relevant SC Resolution

# Future Research

- Variables
  - What happens when some variables work favorably, and others don't?
  - Are there some variables that absolutely must operate favorably?
  
- Timing
  - What accounts for the unprecedented swiftness of the intervention in Libya?
  
- The conceptualization of humanitarian intervention
  - Was Libya only an exception?