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Since February 15th, 2011 Libya has been engaged in an ongoing civil war in which the country has been divided between rebels in favor of removing Muammar el-Qaddafi from his position of Libya's supreme ruler and those in favor of keeping him in his position. Most recently, Qaddafi has been using military force and censorship against the uprising in order to help him maintain his position of power as the conflict continues to grow increasingly out of hand. The world is shocked as it closely observes how what began as peaceful Libyan protests against Qaddafi have erupted into an all out civil war for the country. While the war itself is indeed startling, the wars' origins and developments throughout the war are not quite so unexpected with history showing a clear path leading up to them.

Muammar Qaddafi has ruled over Libya for forty-two years since overthrowing King Idris in 1969. Qaddafi has ruled been in power as Libya grew from a poor African country to becoming a prosperous nation through it's production of oil and petroleum. Due to Libya's small population and wealth from it's natural resources Libya's people have been able to enjoy a higher standard of living. However, great wealth has also brought great corruption into Libya's government as Libyan government officials have been repeatedly taking money which does not belong to them and using their position to avoid the justices which would punish average Libyan citizens. Furthermore, Qadaffi and other Libyan officials have unjustly hired mercenaries and used the Libyan military to eliminate anyone or anything that could potentially be a threat to their power. Perhaps even worse than the exercise of unjust force, the Libyan government has been

doing it's best to censor media and other communications which may display an unfavorable sentiment toward the Libyan government.

Due to the corruption within the government, Libyan citizens have decided a return to Libya's 1952 constitution and a transition to a multi-party democracy would be the best solution for the country. Inspired by recent successful uprisings in Egypt and in Tunisia the Libyan people began organizing and holding non-violent protests on February 15th, 2011. Qaddafi and Libyan government responded with force which has caused a civil war splitting the country between those who want a democratic return to Libya's roots and those who recognize what Qaddafi has done for Libya and wish for him to stay in power.

There have been several significant developments in the war recently. Qadaffi has tapped into Libya's oil reserves and sharing it's wealth with surrounding nations such as Mali in order to gain allies for the Libyan government to stop rebellions. With oil being Libya's primary resource and with it being in nearly limitless supply this a smart, effective, and expected strategy for Libya. Seeing the violence spread by Qadaffi and the crimes he has committed against humanity, NATO has recently been aiding rebel forces by launching air strikes against the Libyan military. With nations in NATO such as the United States which are built upon a revolutionary history, providing aid other revolutionaries against oppressive rulers is not out of character but perhaps a bit reckless. Rebels have recently been developing new tactics and machinery to fight government forces in hidden workshops and small secret factories throughout Libya. Given Libya's history of previously having two major revolutions these tactics are both familiar and effective for the Libyan rebels.

The ongoing civil war in Libya has been a violent, bloody rebellion to an oppression under a corrupt government. The war has shocked the world by disseminating from non-violent protests into a gruesome conflict. However, despite the startling beginning to the war, the origins of the civil war and recent developments are actually rather familiar when being closely compared with Libya's history. History can help us to understand the present and avoid making mistakes in the future. It is important to continue to observe the war with one eye still focused on Libya's history.

Sources Used:

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