

= Chadian ? Libyan conflict =

The Chadian ? Libyan conflict was a series of sporadic clashes in Chad between 1978 and 1987 between Libyan and Chadian forces . Libya had been involved in Chad 's internal affairs prior to 1978 and before Muammar Gaddafi 's rise to power in Libya in 1969 , beginning with the extension of the Chadian Civil War to northern Chad in 1968 . The conflict was marked by a series of four separate Libyan interventions in Chad , taking place in 1978 , 1979 , 1980 ? 1981 and 1983 ? 1987 . In all of these occasions Gaddafi had the support of a number of factions participating in the civil war , while Libya 's opponents found the support of the French government , which intervened militarily to save the Chadian government in 1978 , 1983 and 1986 .

The pattern of the war delineated itself in 1978 , with the Libyans providing armour , artillery and air support and their Chadian allies the infantry , which assumed the bulk of the scouting and fighting . This pattern was radically changed in 1986 , towards the end of the war , when most Chadian forces united in opposing the Libyan occupation of northern Chad with a degree of unity that had never been seen before in Chad . This deprived the Libyan forces of their habitual infantry , exactly when they found themselves confronting a mobile army , well provided now with anti @-@ tank and anti @-@ air missiles , thus cancelling the Libyan superiority in firepower . What followed was the Toyota War , in which the Libyan forces were routed and expelled from Chad , putting an end to the conflict .

Gaddafi initially intended to annex the Aouzou Strip , the northernmost part of Chad , which he claimed as part of Libya on the grounds of an unratified treaty of the colonial period . In 1972 his goals became , in the evaluation of historian Mario Azevedo , the creation of a client state in Libya 's " underbelly " , an Islamic republic modelled after his jamahiriya , that would maintain close ties with Libya , and secure his control over the Aouzou Strip ; expulsion of the French from the region ; and use of Chad as a base to expand his influence in Central Africa .

= = Events = =

= = Occupation of the Aouzou Strip = = =

Libyan involvement with Chad can be said to have started in 1968 , during the Chadian Civil War , when the insurgent Muslim National Liberation Front of Chad (FROLINAT) extended its guerrilla war against the Christian President François Tombalbaye to the northerly Borkou @-@ Ennedi @-@ Tibesti Prefecture (BET) . Libya 's king Idris I felt compelled to support the FROLINAT because of long @-@ standing strong links between the two sides of the Chadian @-@ Libyan border . To preserve relations with Chad 's former colonial master and current protector , France , Idris limited himself to granting the rebels sanctuary in Libyan territory and to providing only non @-@ lethal supplies .

All this changed with the Libyan coup d'état of 1 September 1969 that deposed Idris and brought Muammar Gaddafi to power . Gaddafi claimed the Aouzou Strip in northern Chad , referring to an unratified treaty signed in 1935 by Italy and France (then the colonial powers of Libya and Chad , respectively) . Such claims had been previously made when in 1954 Idris had tried to occupy Aouzou , but his troops were repelled by the French Colonial Forces .

Though initially wary of the FROLINAT , Gaddafi had come to see by 1970 the organization as useful to his needs . With the support of Soviet bloc nations , particularly East Germany , he trained and armed the insurgents , and provided them with weapons and funding . On 27 August 1971 Chad accused Egypt and Libya of backing a coup against then @-@ president Tombalbaye by recently amnestied Chadians .

On the day of the failed coup , Tombalbaye cut all diplomatic relations with Libya and Egypt , and invited all Libyan opposition groups to base themselves in Chad , and started laying claims to Fezzan on the grounds of " historical rights " . Gaddafi 's answer was to officially recognize on 17 September the FROLINAT as the sole legitimate government of Chad . In October , Chadian

Foreign Minister Baba Hassan denounced Libya 's " expansionist ideas " at the United Nations .

Through French pressure on Libya and the mediation of Nigerien President Hamani Diori , the two countries resumed diplomatic relations on 17 April 1972 . Shortly after , Tombalbaye broke diplomatic relations with Israel and is said to have secretly agreed on 28 November to cede the Aouzou Strip to Libya . In exchange , Gaddafi pledged 40 million pounds to the Chadian President and the two countries signed a Treaty of Friendship in December 1972 . Gaddafi withdrew official support to the FROLINAT and forced its leader Abba Siddick to move his headquarters from Tripoli to Algiers . Good relations were confirmed in the following years , with Gaddafi visiting the Chadian capital N 'Djamena in March 1974 ; in the same month a joint bank was created to provide Chad with investment funds .

Six months after the signing of the 1972 treaty , Libyan troops moved into the Strip and established an airbase just north of Aouzou , protected by surface @-@ to @-@ air missiles . A civil administration was set up , attached to Kufra , and Libyan citizenship was extended to the few thousand inhabitants of the area . From that moment , Libyan maps represented the area as part of Libya .

The exact terms by which Libya gained Aouzou remain partly obscure , and are debated . The existence of a secret agreement between Tombalbaye and Gaddafi was revealed only in 1988 , when the Libyan President exhibited an alleged copy of a letter in which Tombalbaye recognizes Libyan claims . Against this , scholars like Bernard Lanne have argued that there never was any sort of formal agreement , and that Tombalbaye had found it expedient not to mention the occupation of a part of his country . Libya was unable to exhibit the original copy of the agreement when the case of the Aouzou Strip was brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1993 .

= = = Expansion of the insurgency = = =

The rapprochement was not to last long , as on 13 April 1975 a coup d 'état removed Tombalbaye and replaced him with General Félix Malloum . As the coup was partly motivated by opposition to Tombalbaye 's appeasement of Libya , Gaddafi considered it a menace to his influence and resumed supplying the FROLINAT . In April 1976 , there was a Gaddafi @-@ backed attempted assassination of Malloum , and in the same year Libyan troops started making forays into central Chad in company of FROLINAT forces .

Libyan activism began generating concerns in the strongest faction into which the FROLINAT had split , the Command Council of the Armed Forces of the North (CCFAN) . The insurgents split on the issue of Libyan support in October 1976 , with a minority leaving the militia and forming the Armed Forces of the North (FAN) , led by the anti @-@ Libyan Hissène Habré . The majority , willing to accept an alliance with Gaddafi , was commanded by Goukouni Oueddei . The latter group soon renamed itself People 's Armed Forces (FAP) .

In those years , Gaddafi 's support had been mostly moral , with only a limited supply of weapons . All this started changing in February 1977 , when the Libyans provided Goukouni 's men with hundreds of AK @-@ 47 assault rifles , dozens of RPGs , 81 and 82mm mortars and recoilless cannons . Armed with these weapons , the FAP attacked in June the Chadian Armed Forces ' (FAT) strongholds of Bardaï and Zouar in Tibesti and of Ounianga Kébir in Borkou . Goukouni assumed with this attack full control of the Tibesti , because Bardaï , besieged since 22 June , surrendered on 4 July , while Zouar was evacuated . The FAT lost 300 men , and piles of military supplies fell into the hands of the rebels . Ounianga was attacked on 20 June , but was saved by the French military advisors present there .

As it had become evident that the Aouzou Strip was being used by Libya as a base for deeper involvement in Chad , Malloum decided to bring the issue of the Strip 's occupation before the UN and the Organisation of African Unity . Malloum also decided he needed new allies ; he negotiated a formal alliance with Habré , the Khartoum Accord , in September . This accord was kept secret until 22 January , when a Fundamental Charter was signed , following which a National Union Government was formed on 29 August 1978 with Habré as Prime Minister . The Malloum @-@ Habré accord was actively promoted by Sudan and Saudi Arabia , both of which feared a radical

Chad controlled by Gaddafi . The two nations saw in Habré , with his good Muslim and anti @-@ colonialist credentials , the only chance to thwart Gaddafi 's plans .

= = = Libyan escalation = = =

The Malloum @-@ Habré accord was perceived by Gaddafi as a serious threat to his influence in Chad , and he increased the level of Libyan involvement . For the first time with the active participation of Libyan ground units , Goukouni 's FAP unleashed the Ibrahim Abatcha offensive on 29 January 1978 against the last outposts held by the government in northern Chad : Faya @-@ Largeau , Fada and Ounianga Kebir . The attacks were successful , and Goukouni and the Libyans assumed control of the BET Prefecture .

The decisive confrontation between the Libyan @-@ FAP forces and the Chadian regular forces took place at Faya @-@ Largeau , the capital of the BET . The city , defended by 5 @,@ 000 Chadian soldiers , fell on 18 February after sharp fighting to a force of 2 @,@ 500 rebels , supported by possibly as many as 4 @,@ 000 Libyan troops . The Libyans do not seem to have directly participated in the fighting ; in a pattern that was to repeat itself in the future , the Libyans provided armor , artillery and air support . The rebels also were much better armed than before , displaying Strela 2 surface @-@ to @-@ air missiles .

Goukouni captured about 2 @,@ 500 prisoners in 1977 and 1978 ; as a result , the Chadian Armed Forces lost at least 20 % of its manpower . In particular , the National and Nomadic Guard (GNN) was decimated by the fall of Fada and Faya . Goukouni used these victories to strengthen his position in the FROLINAT : during a Libyan @-@ sponsored congress held in March in Faya , the insurgency 's main factions reunited themselves and nominated Goukouni as the secretary @-@ general .

Malloum 's reaction to the Goukouni ? Gaddafi offensive was to sever diplomatic relations with Libya on 6 February and bring before the UN Security Council the issue of Libyan involvement . He raised again the question of Libya 's occupation of the Aouzou Strip ; on 19 February , however , after the fall of Faya , Malloum was forced to accept a ceasefire and withdraw the protest . Gaddafi halted the advance of Goukouni because of pressure from France , then an important supplier of Libya 's weapons .

Malloum and Gaddafi restored diplomatic relations on 24 February in Sabha , Libya , where an international peace conference was held which included as mediators Niger 's President , Seyni Kountché , and Sudan 's Vice @-@ President , Abu al @-@ Gasim Mohamed Ibrahim . Under severe pressure from France , Sudan and Zaire , Malloum was forced to sign the Benghazi Accord , which recognized the FROLINAT and agreed on a new ceasefire , on 27 March . The agreement called for the creation of a joint Libya ? Niger military committee tasked with implementation ; through this committee , Chad legitimized Libyan intervention in its territory . The accord also contained a condition dear to Libya : the termination of all French military presence in Chad . The stillborn accord was for Gaddafi nothing more than a strategy to strengthen his protégé Goukouni ; it also weakened considerably Malloum 's prestige among southern Chadians , who saw his concessions as a proof of his weak leadership .

On 15 April , only a few days after signing the ceasefire , Goukouni left Faya , leaving there a Libyan garrison of 800 men . Relying on Libyan armor and airpower , Goukouni 's forces conquered a small FAT garrison and pointed towards N 'Djamena .

Against Goukouni stood freshly arrived French forces . Already in 1977 , after Goukouni 's first offensives , Malloum had asked for a French military return in Chad , but President Valéry Giscard d 'Estaing was at first reluctant to commit himself before the March 1978 legislative elections ; also , France was afraid of damaging its profitable commercial and diplomatic relations with Libya . However , the rapid deterioration of the situation in Chad resolved the President on 20 February 1978 to start Opération Tacaud , which by April brought 2 @,@ 500 troops to Chad to secure the capital from the rebels .

The decisive battle took place at Ati , a town 430 kilometres northeast of N 'Djamena . The town 's garrison of 1 @,@ 500 soldiers was attacked on 19 May by the FROLINAT insurgents , equipped

with artillery and modern weapons . The garrison was relieved by the arrival of a Chadian task force supported by armor and , more importantly , of the French Foreign Legion and the 3rd Regiment of Marine Infantry . In a two @-@ day battle , the FROLINAT was repelled with heavy losses , a victory that was confirmed in June by another engagement at Djedaa . The FROLINAT admitted defeat and fled north , having lost 2 @,@ 000 men and left the " ultramodern equipment " they carried on the ground . Of key importance in these battles was the complete air superiority the French could count on , as the Libyan Air Force pilots refused to fight them .

= = = Libyan difficulties = = =

Only a few months after the failed offensive against the capital , major dissensions in the FROLINAT shattered all vestiges of unity and badly weakened Libyan power in Chad . On the night of 27 August , Ahmat Acyl , leader of the Volcan Army , attacked Faya @-@ Largeau with the support of Libyan troops in what was apparently an attempt by Gaddafi to remove Goukouni from the leadership of the FROLINAT , replacing him with Acyl . The attempt backfired , as Goukouni reacted by expelling all Libyan military advisors present in Chad , and started searching for a compromise with France .

The reasons for the clash between Gaddafi and Goukouni were both ethnic and political . The FROLINAT was divided between Arabs , like Acyl , and Toubous , like Goukouni and Habré . These ethnic divisions also reflected a different attitude towards Gaddafi and his Green Book . In particular , Goukouni and his men had shown themselves reluctant to follow Gaddafi 's solicitations to make The Green Book the official policy of the FROLINAT , and had first tried to take time , postponing the question until the complete reunification of the movement . When the unification was accomplished , and Gaddafi pressed again for the adoption of The Green Book , the dissensions in the Revolution 's Council became manifest , with many proclaiming their loyalty to the movement 's original platform approved in 1966 when Ibrahim Abatcha was made first secretary @-@ general , while others , including Acyl , fully embraced the Colonel 's ideas .

In N 'Djamena , the simultaneous presence of two armies ? Prime Minister Habré 's FAN and President Malloum 's FAT ? set the stage for the battle of N 'Djamena , which was to bring about the collapse of the State and the ascent to power of the Northern elite . A minor incident escalated on 12 February 1979 into heavy fighting between Habré and Malloum 's forces , and the battle intensified on 19 February when Goukouni 's men entered in the capital to fight alongside Habré . By 16 March , when the first international peace conference took place , an estimated 2 @,@ 000 ? 5 @,@ 000 people had been killed and 60 @,@ 000 ? 70 @,@ 000 forced to flee . The greatly diminished Chadian army left the capital in the rebels ' hands and reorganized itself in the south under the leadership of Wadel Abdelkader Kamougué . During the battle , the French garrison stood passively by , even helping Habré in certain circumstances , as when they demanded that the Chadian Air Force stop its bombings .

An international peace conference was held in Kano in Nigeria , in which Chad 's bordering states participated along with Malloum , Habré , and Goukouni . The Kano Accord was signed on 16 March by all those present , and Malloum resigned , replaced by a Council of State under the chairmanship of Goukouni . This was a result of Nigerian and French pressures on Goukouni and Habré to share power ; the French in particular saw this as part of their strategy to cut all ties between Goukouni and Gaddafi . A few weeks later , the same factions formed the Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT) , kept together to a considerable extent by the common desire to see Libya out of Chad .

Despite signing the Kano Accord , Libya was incensed that the GUNT did not include any of the leaders of the Volcan Army and had not recognized Libyan claims on the Aouzou Strip . Since 13 April there had been some minor Libyan military activity in northern Chad , and support was provided to the secessionist movement in the south . However , a major response came only after 25 June , when the ultimatum of Chad 's neighbors for the formation of a new , more inclusive coalition government expired . On 26 June , 2 @,@ 500 Libyan troops invaded Chad , heading for Faya @-@ Largeau . The Chadian government appealed for French help . The Libyan forces were

first stymied by Goukouni 's militiamen , and then forced to retreat by French reconnaissance planes and bombers . In the same month , the factions excluded by the GUNT founded a counter @-@ government , the Front for Joint Provisional Action (FACP) , in northern Chad with Libyan military support .

The fighting with Libya , the imposition by Nigeria of an economic boycott , and international pressure led to a new international peace conference in Lagos in August , to which all eleven factions present in Chad participated . A new accord was signed on 21 August , under which a new GUNT was to be formed , open to all factions . The French troops were to leave Chad and be replaced by a multinational African peace force . The new GUNT took office in November , with Goukouni President , Kamougué Vice @-@ President , Habré Defence Minister and Acyl Foreign Minister . Despite the presence of Habré , the new composition of the GUNT had enough pro @-@ Libyans to satisfy Gaddafi .

= = = Libyan intervention = = =

From the start , Habré isolated himself from the other members of the GUNT , which he treated with disdain . Habré 's hostility for Libya 's influence in Chad united itself with his ambition and ruthlessness : observers concluded that the warlord would never be content with anything short of the highest office . It was thought that sooner or later an armed confrontation between Habré and the pro @-@ Libyan factions would take place , and more importantly , between Habré and Goukouni .

Clashes in the capital between Habré 's FAN and pro @-@ Libyan groups became progressively more serious . On 22 March 1980 , a minor incident , as in 1979 , triggered the second battle of N 'Djamena . In ten days , the clashes between the FAN and Goukouni 's FAP , which both had 1 @,@ 000 ? 1 @,@ 500 troops in the city , caused thousands of casualties and the flight of about half the capital 's population . The few remaining French troops , who left on 4 May , proclaimed themselves neutral , as did the Zairean peace force .

While the FAN was supplied economically and militarily by Sudan and Egypt , Goukouni received the armed support of Kamougué 's FAT and Acyl 's CDR shortly after the beginning of the battle , and was provided with Libyan artillery . On 6 June , the FAN assumed control of the city of Faya . This alarmed Goukouni , and he signed , on 15 June , a Treaty of Friendship with Libya . The treaty gave Libya a free hand in Chad , legitimising its presence in that country ; the treaty 's first article committed the two countries to mutual defence , and a threat against one constituted a threat against the other .

Beginning in October , Libyan troops , led by Khalifa Haftar and Ahmed Oun , airlifted to the Aouzou Strip operated in conjunction with Goukouni 's forces to reoccupy Faya . The city was then used as an assembly point for tanks , artillery and armored vehicles that moved south against the capital of N 'Djamena .

An attack started on 6 December , spearheaded by Soviet T @-@ 54 and T @-@ 55 tanks and reportedly coordinated by advisors from the Soviet Union and East Germany , brought the fall of the capital on 16 December . The Libyan force , numbering between 7 @,@ 000 and 9 @,@ 000 men of regular units and the paramilitary Pan @-@ African Islamic Legion , 60 tanks , and other armored vehicles , had been ferried across 1 @,@ 100 kilometers of desert from Libya 's southern border , partly by airlift and tank transporters and partly under its own power . The border itself was 1 @,@ 000 to 1 @,@ 100 kilometers from Libya 's main bases on the Mediterranean coast . Wright states that the Libyan intervention demonstrated an impressive logistical ability , and provided Gaddafi with his first military victory and a substantial political achievement .

While forced into exile and with his forces confined to the frontier zones of Darfur , Habré remained defiant . On 31 December he announced in Dakar he would resume fighting as a guerrilla against the GUNT .

= = = Libyan withdrawal = = =

On 6 January 1981 , a joint communiqué was issued in Tripoli by Gaddafi and Goukouni that Libya and Chad had decided " to work to achieve full unity between the two countries " . The merger plan caused strong adverse reaction in Africa , and was immediately condemned by France , which on 11 January offered to strengthen its garrisons in friendly African states and on 15 January placed its Mediterranean fleet on alert . Libya answered by threatening to impose an oil embargo , while France threatened to react if Libya attacked another bordering country . The accord was also opposed by all GUNT ministers present with Goukouni at Tripoli , with the exception of Acyl .

Most observers believe that the reasons behind Goukouni 's accepting the accord may be found in a mix of threats , intense pressure and the financial help promised by Gaddafi . Just before his visit to the Libyan capital , Goukouni had sent two of his commanders to Libya for consultations ; at Tripoli , Goukouni learned from Gaddafi that they had been assassinated by " Libyan dissidents " , and that if Goukouni did not want to risk losing Libyan favour and lose power , he should accept the merger plan .

The level of opposition caused Gaddafi and Goukouni to downplay the importance of the communiqué , speaking of a " union " of peoples , and not of states , and as a " first step " towards closer collaboration . But the damage had been done , and the joint communiqué badly weakened Goukouni 's prestige as a nationalist and a statesman .

In response to the increasing international pressure , Goukouni stated that Libyan forces were in Chad by government request , and that international mediators should accept the decision of Chad 's legitimate government . In a meeting held in May , Goukouni became more accommodating , declaring that while Libyan withdrawal was not a priority , he would accept the decisions of the OAU . Goukouni could not at the time renounce Libyan military support , necessary for dealing with Habré 's FAN , which was supported by Egypt and Sudan and funded through Egypt by the US Central Intelligence Agency .

Relations between Goukouni and Gaddafi started deteriorating . Libyan troops were stationed in various points of northern and central Chad , in numbers that had reached about 14 @, @ 000 troops by January ? February 1981 . These forces created considerable annoyance in the GUNT by supporting Acyl 's faction in its disputes with the other militias , including the clashes held in late April with Goukouni 's FAP . There were also attempts to Libyanize the local population , which made many conclude that " unification " for Libya meant Arabization and the imposition of Libyan political culture , in particular of The Green Book .

Amid fighting in October between Gaddafi 's Islamic Legionnaires and Goukouni 's troops , and rumors that Acyl was planning a coup d 'état to assume the leadership of the GUNT , Goukouni demanded on 29 October the complete and unequivocal withdrawal of Libyan forces from Chadian territory , which , beginning with the capital , was to be completed by 31 December . The Libyans were to be replaced by an OAU Inter @-@ African Force (IAF) . Gaddafi complied , and by 16 November all Libyan forces had left Chad , redeploying in the Aouzou Strip .

Libya 's prompt retreat took many observers by surprise . One reason lay in Gaddafi 's desire to host the OAU 's annual conference in 1982 and assume the organization 's presidency . Another was Libya 's difficult situation in Chad where , without some popular and international acceptance for Libyan presence , it would have been difficult to take the concrete risk of causing a war with Egypt and Sudan , with US support . Gaddafi had not renounced the goals he had set for Chad , but he had to find a new Chadian leader , as Goukouni had proved himself unreliable .

= = = Habré takes N 'Djamena = = =

The first IAF component to arrive in Chad were the Zairean paratroopers ; they were followed by Nigerian and Senegalese forces , bringing the IAF to 3 @, @ 275 men . Before the peace @-@ keeping force was fully deployed , Habré had already taken advantage of Libya 's withdrawal , and made massive inroads in eastern Chad , including the important city of Abéché , that fell on 19 November . Next to fall was Oum Hadjer in early January 1982 , only 160 kilometres (99 mi) from Ati , the last major town before the capital . The GUNT was saved for the moment by the IAF , the only credible military force confronting Habré , which prevented the FAN from taking Ati .

In the light of Habré 's offensive , the OAU requested that the GUNT open reconciliation talks with Habré , a demand that was angrily refused by Goukouni ; later he was to say :

" The OAU has deceived us . Our security was fully ensured by Libyan troops . The OAU put pressure on us to expel the Libyans . Now that they have gone , the organization has abandoned us while imposing on us a negotiated settlement with Hissein Habre " .

In May 1982 , the FAN started a final offensive , passing unhindered by the peacekeepers in Ati and Mongo . Goukouni , increasingly angered with the IAF 's refusal to fight Habré , made an attempt to restore his relations with Libya , and reached Tripoli on 23 May . Gaddafi , however , burned by his experience the previous year , proclaimed Libya neutral in the civil war .

The GUNT forces made a last stand at Massaguet , 80 kilometres (50 mi) north of capital , but were defeated by the FAN on 5 June after a hard battle . Two days later Habré entered N 'Djamena unopposed , making him the de facto leader of Chad , while Goukouni fled the country , seeking sanctuary in Cameroon .

After occupying the capital , Habré consolidated power by occupying the rest of the country . In barely six weeks , he conquered southern Chad , destroying the FAT , Kamougué 's militia ; Kamougué 's hopes for Libyan help failed to materialize . The rest of the country was conquered , with the exception of the Tibesti .

= = = GUNT offensive = = =

Since Gaddafi had kept mostly aloof in the months prior to the fall of N 'Djamena , Habré hoped to reach an understanding with Libya , possibly through an accord with Acyl , who appeared receptive to dialogue . But Acyl died on 19 July , replaced by Acheikh ibn Oumar , and the CDR was antagonized by Habré 's eagerness to unify the country , which led him to overrun the CDR 's domains .

Therefore , it was with Libyan support that Goukouni reassembled the GUNT , creating in October a National Peace Government in the Tibesti town of Bardaï and claiming itself the legitimate government by the terms of the Lagos Accord . For the impending fight , Goukouni could count on 3 @, @ 000 ? 4 @, @ 000 men taken from several militias , later merged in an Armée Nationale de Libération (ANL) under the command of a Southerner , Negue Djogo .

Before Gaddafi could throw his full weight behind Goukouni , Habré attacked the GUNT in the Tibesti , but was repelled both in December 1982 and in January 1983 . The following months saw the clashes intensify in the North , while talks , including visits in March between Tripoli and N 'Djamena , broke down . On 17 March , Habré brought the conflict before the UN , asking for an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council to consider Libya 's " aggression and occupation " of Chadian territory .

Gaddafi was ready now for an offensive . The decisive offensive began in June , when a 3 @, @ 000 @-@ strong GUNT force invested Faya @-@ Largeau , the main government stronghold in the North , which fell on 25 June . The GUNT force rapidly proceeded towards Koro Toro , Oum Chalouba and Abéché , assuming control of the main routes towards N 'Djamena . Libya , while helping with recruiting , training , and providing the GUNT with heavy artillery , only committed a few thousand regular troops to the offensive , and most of these were artillery and logistic units . This may have been due to Gaddafi 's desire that the conflict be read as a Chadian internal affair .

The international community , in particular France and the US , reacted adversely to the Libyan @-@ backed offensive . On the same day as the fall of Faya , French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson warned Libya that France would " not remain indifferent " to a new Libyan involvement in Chad , and on 11 July the French government accused again Libya of direct military support to the rebels . French arms shipments were resumed on 27 June , and on 3 July a first contingent of 250 Zaireans arrived to strengthen Habré ; the United States announced in July military and food aid for 10 million dollars . Gaddafi suffered also a diplomatic setback from the OAU , that at the meeting held in June officially recognized Habré 's government and asked for all foreign troops to leave Chad .

Supplied by Americans , Zaireans and the French , Habré rapidly reorganized his forces (now

called Chadian National Armed Forces , or FANT) . FANT marched north to confront the GUNT and the Libyans , who he met south of Abéché . Habré crushed Goukouni 's forces and started a vast counteroffensive that enabled him to retake in rapid succession Abéché , Biltine , Fada and , on 30 July , Faya @-@ Largeau , threatening to attack the Tibesti and the Aouzou Strip .

= = = French intervention = = =

Feeling that a complete destruction of the GUNT would be an intolerable blow for his prestige , and fearing that Habré would provide support for all opposition to Gaddafi , the Colonel called for a Libyan intervention in force , as his Chadian allies could not secure a definitive victory without Libyan armor and airpower .

Since the day after the fall of the town , Faya @-@ Largeau was subjected to a sustained air bombardment , using Su @-@ 22 and Mirage F @-@ 1s from the Aouzou air base , along with Tu @-@ 22 bombers from Sabha . Within ten days , a large ground force had been assembled east and west of Faya @-@ Largeau by first ferrying men , armor , and artillery by air to Sabha , Kufra and the Aouzou airfield , and then by shorter @-@ range transport planes to the area of conflict . The fresh Libyan forces amounted to 11 @,@ 000 mostly regular troops , and eighty combat aircraft participated in the offensive ; however , the Libyans maintained their traditional role of providing fire support , and occasional tank charges , for the assaults of the GUNT , which could count on 3 @,@ 000 ? 4 @,@ 000 men on this occasion .

The GUNT @-@ Libyan alliance invested on 10 August the Faya @-@ Largeau oasis , where Habré had entrenched himself with about 5 @,@ 000 troops . Battered by multiple rocket launcher (MRL) , artillery and tank fire and continuous airstrikes , the FANT 's defensive line disintegrated when the GUNT launched the final assault , leaving 700 FANT troops on the ground . Habré escaped with the remnants of his army to the capital , without being pursued by the Libyans .

This was to prove a tactical blunder , as the new Libyan intervention had alarmed France . Habré issued a fresh plea for French military assistance on 6 August . France , also due to American and African pressures , announced on 6 August the return of French troops in Chad as part of Operation Manta , meant to stop the GUNT @-@ Libyan advance and more generally weaken Gaddafi 's influence in the internal affairs of Chad . Three days later several hundred French troops were dispatched to N 'Djamena from the Central African Republic , later brought to 2 @,@ 700 , with several squadrons of Jaguar fighter @-@ bombers . This made it the largest expeditionary force ever assembled by the French in Africa outside of the Algerian War .

The French government then defined a limit (the so @-@ called Red Line) , along the 15th parallel , extending from Mao to Abéché , and warned that they would not tolerate any incursion south of this line by Libyan or GUNT forces . Both the Libyans and the French remained on their side of the line , with France showing itself unwilling to help Habré retake the north , while the Libyans avoided starting a conflict with France by attacking the line . This led to a de facto division of the country , with Libya maintaining control of all the territory north of the Red Line .

A lull ensued , during which November talks sponsored by the OAU failed to conciliate the opposing Chadian factions . Ethiopian leader Mengistu 's attempt at the beginning of 1984 was also unsuccessful . Mengistu 's failure was followed on 24 January by a GUNT attack , supported by heavy Libyan armor , on the FANT outpost of Ziguey , a move mainly meant to persuade France and the African states to reopen negotiations . France reacted to this breach of the Red Line by launching the first significant air counter @-@ attack , bringing new troops into Chad and unilaterally raising the defensive line to the 16th parallel .

= = = French withdrawal = = =

To put an end to the deadlock , Gaddafi proposed on 30 April a mutual withdrawal of both the French and Libyan forces in Chad . French President François Mitterrand showed himself receptive to the offer , and on 17 September the two leaders publicly announced that the mutual withdrawal would start on 25 September , and be completed by 10 November . The accord was at first hailed by

the media as proof of Mitterrand 's diplomatic skill and a decisive progress towards the solution of the Chadian crisis ; it also demonstrated Mitterrand 's intent of following a foreign policy independent from both the US and the Chadian government regarding Libya and Chad .

While France respected the deadline , the Libyans limited themselves to retiring some forces , while maintaining at least 3 @, @ 000 men stationed in Northern Chad . When this became evident , it embarrassed the French and caused recriminations between the French and Chadian governments . On 16 November , Mitterrand met with Gaddafi on Crete , under the auspices of the Greek prime minister Papandreou . Despite Gaddafi 's declaration that all Libyan forces had been withdrawn , the next day Mitterrand admitted that this was not true . However , he did not order French troops back to Chad .

According to Nolutshungu , the 1984 bilateral Franco @-@ Libyan agreement may have provided Gaddafi with an excellent opportunity to find an exit from the Chadian quagmire , while bolstering his international prestige and giving him an opportunity to force Habré into accepting a peace accord which would have included Libya 's proxies . Instead , Gaddafi misread France 's withdrawal as a willingness to accept Libya 's military presence in Chad and the de facto annexation of the whole BET Prefecture by Libya , an action that was certain to meet the opposition of all Chadian factions and of the OAU and UN . Gaddafi 's blunder would eventually bring about his defeat , with the rebellion against him of the GUNT and a new French expedition in 1986 .

= = = New French intervention = = =

During the period between 1984 and 1986 , in which no major clash took place , Habré greatly strengthened his position thanks to staunch US support and Libya 's failure to respect the Franco @-@ Libyan 1984 agreement . Also decisive was the increasing factional bickering that started plaguing the GUNT since 1984 , centered around the fight between Goukouni and Acheikh ibn Oumar over the organization 's leadership .

In this period , Gaddafi expanded his control over northern Chad , building new roads and erecting a major new airbase , Ouadi Doum , meant to better support air and ground operations beyond the Aouzou Strip . He also brought in considerable reinforcements in 1985 , raising Libyan forces in the country to 7 @, @ 000 troops , 300 tanks and 60 combat aircraft . While this build @-@ up took place , significant elements of the GUNT passed over to the Habré government , as part of the latter 's policy of accommodation .

These desertions alarmed Gaddafi , as the GUNT provided a cover of legitimacy to Libya 's presence in Chad . To put a halt to these and reunite the GUNT , a major offensive was launched on the Red Line with the goal of taking N 'Djamena . The attack , started on 10 February 1986 , involved 5 @, @ 000 Libyan and 5 @, @ 000 GUNT troops , and concentrated on the FANT outposts of Kouba Olanga , Kalait and Oum Chalouba . The campaign ended in disaster for Gaddafi , when a FANT counteroffensive on 13 February using the new equipment obtained from the French forced the attackers to withdraw and reorganize .

Most important was French reaction to the attack . Gaddafi had possibly believed that , due to the upcoming French legislative elections , Mitterrand would be reluctant to start a new risky and costly expedition to save Habré ; this evaluation proved wrong , as what the French President could not politically risk was to show weakness towards Libyan aggression . As a result , on 14 February Opération Epervier was started , bringing 1 @, @ 200 French troops and several squadrons of Jaguars to Chad . On 16 February , to send a clear message to Gaddafi , the French Air Force bombed Libya 's Ouadi Doum airbase . Libya retaliated the next day when a Libyan Tu @-@ 22 bombed the N 'Djamena Airport , causing minimal damage .

= = = Tibesti War = = =

The defeats suffered in February and March accelerated the disintegration of the GUNT . When in March , at a new round of OAU @-@ sponsored talks held in the People 's Republic of Congo , Goukouni failed to appear , many suspected the hand of Libya . These suspicions caused the

defection from the GUNT of its vice president , Kamougué , followed by the First Army and the piecemeal FROLINAT Originel . In August , it was the CDR 's turn to leave the coalition , seizing the town of Fada . When in October Goukouni 's FAP attempted to retake Fada , the Libyan garrison attacked Goukouni 's troops , giving way to a pitched battle that effectively ended the GUNT . In the same month , Goukouni was arrested by the Libyans , while his troops rebelled against Gaddafi , dislodging the Libyans from all their positions in the Tibesti , and on 24 October went over to Habré .

To reestablish their supply lines and retake the towns of Bardaï , Zouar and Wour , the Libyans sent a task @-@ force of 2 @,@ 000 troops with T @-@ 62 tanks and heavy support by the Libyan Air Force into the Tibesti . The offensive started successfully , expelling the GUNT from its key strongholds , also through the use of napalm . This attack ultimately backfired , causing the prompt reaction of Habré , who sent 2 @,@ 000 FANT soldiers to link with the GUNT forces . Also Mitterrand reacted forcefully , ordering a mission which parachuted fuel , food , ammunition and anti @-@ tank missiles to the rebels , and also infiltrated military personnel . Through this action , the French made clear that they no longer felt committed to keep south of the Red Line , and were ready to act whenever they found it necessary .

While militarily Habré was only partly successful in his attempt to evict the Libyans from the Tibesti (the Libyans would fully leave the region in March , when a series of defeats in the north @-@ east had made the area untenable) , the campaign was a great strategic breakthrough for the FANT , as it transformed a civil war into a national war against a foreign invader , stimulating a sense of national unity that had never been seen before in Chad .

= = = Toyota War = = =

At the opening of 1987 , the last year of the war , the Libyan expeditionary force was still impressive , numbering 8 @,@ 000 troops and 300 tanks . However , it had lost the key support of its Chadian allies , who had generally provided reconnaissance and acted as assault infantry . Without them the Libyan garrisons resembled isolated and vulnerable islands in the Chadian desert . On the other side , the FANT was greatly strengthened , now having 10 @,@ 000 highly motivated troops , provided with fast @-@ moving and sand @-@ adapted Toyota trucks equipped with MILAN anti @-@ tank missiles . These trucks gave the name " Toyota War " to the last phase of the conflict .

Habré started , on 2 January 1987 , his reconquest of northern Chad with a successful attack on the well @-@ defended Libyan communications base of Fada . Against the Libyan army the Chadian commander Hassan Djamous conducted a series of swift pincer movements , enveloping the Libyan positions and crushing them with sudden attacks from all sides . This strategy was repeated by Djamous in March in the battles of B 'ir Kora and Ouadi Doum , inflicting crushing losses and forcing Gaddafi to evacuate northern Chad .

This in turn endangered Libyan control over the Aouzou Strip , and Aouzou fell in August to the FANT , only to be repelled by an overwhelming Libyan counter @-@ offensive and the French refusal to provide air cover to the Chadians . Habré readily replied to this setback with the first Chadian incursion in Libyan territory of the Chadian ? Libyan conflict , mounting on 5 September a surprise and fully successful raid against the key Libyan air base at Maaten al @-@ Sarra . This attack was part of a plan to remove the threat of Libyan airpower before a renewed offensive on Aouzou .

The projected attack on Aouzou never took place , as the dimensions of the victory obtained at Maaten made France fear that the attack on the Libyan base was only the first stage of a general offensive into Libya proper , a possibility that France was not willing to tolerate . As for Gaddafi , being subjected to internal and international pressures , he showed himself more conciliatory , which led to an OAU @-@ brokered ceasefire on 11 September .

= = Aftermath = =

While there were many violations of the ceasefire , the incidents were relatively minor . The two

governments immediately started complex diplomatic manoeuvres to bring world opinion on their side in case , as was widely expected , the conflict was resumed . However , the two sides were also careful to leave the door open for a peaceful solution . The latter course was promoted by France and most African states , while the Reagan Administration saw a resumption of the conflict as the best chance to unseat Gaddafi .

Steadily , relations among the two countries improved , with Gaddafi giving signs that he wanted to normalize relations with the Chadian government , to the point of recognizing that the war had been an error . In May 1988 , the Libyan leader declared he would recognize Habré as the legitimate president of Chad " as a gift to Africa " ; this led on 3 October to the resumption of full diplomatic relations between the two countries . The following year , on 31 August 1989 , Chadian and Libyan representatives met in Algiers to negotiate the Framework Agreement on the Peaceful Settlement of the Territorial Dispute , by which Gaddafi agreed to discuss with Habré the Aouzou Strip and to bring the issue to the ICJ for a binding ruling if bilateral talks failed . After a year of inconclusive talks , the sides submitted the dispute to the ICJ in September 1990 .

Chadian @-@ Libyan relations further improved when Libyan @-@ supported Idriss Déby unseated Habré on 2 December . Gaddafi was the first head of state to recognize the new government , and he also signed treaties of friendship and cooperation on various levels . Regarding the Aouzou Strip , however , Déby followed his predecessor , declaring that if necessary he would fight to keep the strip out of Libya 's hands .

The Aouzou dispute was concluded for good on 3 February 1994 , when the judges of the ICJ by a majority of 16 to 1 decided that the Aouzou Strip belonged to Chad . The court 's judgement was implemented without delay , the two parties signing an agreement as early as 4 April concerning the practical modalities for the implementation of the judgement . Monitored by international observers , the withdrawal of Libyan troops from the Strip began on 15 April and was completed by 10 May . The formal and final transfer of the Strip from Libya to Chad took place on 30 May , when the sides signed a joint declaration stating that the Libyan withdrawal had been effected .

Muammar Gaddafi was angered by the devastating counter @-@ attack on Libya and the ensuing defeat at the Battle of Maaten al @-@ Sarra . Forced to accede to a ceasefire , the defeat ended his expansionist projects toward Chad and his dreams of African and Arab dominance .

Given the French intervention on behalf of Chad and U.S. supply of satellite intelligence to FANT during the battle of Maaten al @-@ Sarra , Gaddafi blamed Libya 's defeat on French and U.S. " aggression against Libya " .