

Answer to Question

## Recent Developments in the Libyan Crisis

(Translated)

### Question:

A national unity government was formed in Libya, and it appears that the two parties to the conflict in Libya agree on it. Is this consensus real or not? How did this happen after an armed conflict that lasted for ten years, during which each side was trying to eliminate the other? What is the truth behind the positions of America, Britain, European countries, Turkey and the rest of the intervening countries in the Libyan crisis regarding this consensus?

### Answer:

In view of the recent developments in the Libyan crisis during the past two years, especially since 5/2/2021, when the Political Dialogue Forum, sponsored by the United Nations, elected a unified executive council that took over its duties on 16/3/2021, these developments were caused by successive events:

**First: In the last quarter of last year**, the war of American-British dialogues erupted in the Libyan arena. Britain, through its agents, held dialogue conferences in Morocco, and America, through the Acting UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Stephanie Williams, held meetings in Tunis and Geneva. We have detailed that in the answer to a question dated 25/11/2020, after that matters followed up as follows:

1- On 24/1/2021, Britain, through its agents, with the participation of 13 + 13 representatives from Tripoli and Tobruk, held a conference in Bouznika, Morocco, to elect the executive authorities and distribute the sovereign positions ... until America managed to hold the Geneva Conference between 1 and 5/2/2021. There are 75 political figures who were chosen for negotiations and the selection of new leaders, and pressure was exerted on them from many sides to vote on choosing a presidential council and a new prime minister. On 5/2/2021, it was announced that Muhammad al-Menfi had been chosen as Chairman of the Presidential Council, and Abdul Hamid al-Dabaiba as Prime Minister, and Musa al-Koni and Abdullah al-Lafi were elected to the Presidency Council membership. Thus America was able to elect the executive authorities in Libya and won this round in the conflict with Britain, and then Britain lost the round and was unable to choose new leaders at the last dialogue conference in Bouznika, Morocco. It is considered a heavy loss for Britain after its previous success in convening the Skhirat Conference in Morocco in 2015, when it chose a prime minister and president of a presidential council and formed a government in Tunisia headed by Fayez al-Sarraj...

2- With the election of a unified executive authority (Chairman of the Presidency Council and Prime Minister) by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, which was established by the American diplomat, Acting UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Stephanie Williams, in September 2019 and launched its meetings in the last months of 2020, the United States will practically assume leadership of the political process in Libya, and by this it would have succeeded with conditional success in pulling the Libyan rug from under the feet of the British and Europeans, however this does not imply that it controlled the entirety of the Libyan arena cards.

3- The new executive authority in Libya, elected from the American UN Envoy Williams Forum (the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum), comfortably obtained the votes of the Libyan House of Representatives. ("On March 10, the Libyan parliament gave confidence to the government of national unity headed by Dabaiba, with a number of votes reaching 132 out of a total of 188" (BBC, 14/3/2021), as well as the smooth handover of power from the Sarraj government in Tripoli loyal to the Europeans: ("Libya witnessed the new government taking over its work functions, in a smooth manner and without disturbance. The former National Accord in Tripoli, Fayez al-Sarraj embraced Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh, head of the new government, during his handover of power... and Dbeibeh took the constitutional oath on Monday in the eastern city of Tobruk, where the administration stationed in the east welcomed his appointment." (German Deutsche Welle, 16/3/2021). With all this, the British and European agents in Libya have followed the American solution, and this can only be done with Britain and Europe agreeing

to this solution, even if only temporarily.

4- To complete the scene, there was also the smooth handover of power from the internationally unrecognized government of eastern Libya supported by Egypt and America. (The parallel government in eastern Libya on Tuesday handed over its powers to the new national unity government headed by Abdel Hamid Dabaiba, a week after the latter officially assumed its duties from the capital, Tripoli, and the handover took place at the headquarters of the parallel government, which is not recognized internationally, in Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya, in the presence of its president, Abdullah Al-Thani. The delegation of the National Unity Government was represented by Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Al-Qatrani, Minister of Interior Khaled Mazen, and a number of ministers. Al-Qatrani stressed that the split is "over," he said in a press release "The government of national unity was created to serve all citizens," (France 24, 23/3/2021)).

**Second: Looking at the international and regional positions regarding the current developments of the crisis in Libya, we find the following:**

**America and the United Nations:** Considering that the path of this political solution was drawn and supervised directly by the American United Nations envoy to Libya, America and the United Nations definitely support this path. Stephanie Williams, the American diplomat working on behalf of the United Nations, celebrated her success after the selection of the new leaders and said ("I am pleased to witness this historic moment," she told the Libyan parties, "This is a formal commitment and the elected executive authority must fulfill it" (Al-Arabiya 5/2/2021)). So, the work she did became an official act that was binding on the parties, imposed on them, and they were not entitled to violate it, otherwise they would be subjected to American sanctions that had previously threatened them, in the manner of American haughtiness that imposes solutions and threatens their opponents. The US ambassador to Libya, Richard Norland, confirmed during a telephone conversation with the President of the Libyan Presidency Council, Muhammad Al-Menfi, "The United States supports the Council and the government," and congratulated all participants in the Libyan dialogue and the Libyan leaders. He said, "A reaction is coming from Washington." (Libyan Central Gate 12/2/2021)).

**Turkey's position:** (Turkish President Erdogan contacted the new executive authority, "President of the Presidential Council Muhammad al-Manfi and President of the National Unity Government, Abdul Hamid al-Dabaiba," indicating, i.e. Erdogan, that there are signs of hope regarding finding a permanent solution in Libya... (Al-Jazeera Net, 20/3/2021), then Muhammad al-Manfi visited Turkey on 26/3/2021 (during his meeting with Erdogan, al-Manfi called for the necessity to adhere to the entitlements of the transitional phase in Libya that ends with elections on December 24 of this year, (Al-Arabiya Net 27/3/2021), and then apparently came a Turkish request to withdraw the Syrian fighters from Libya, (sources reported to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that the Turkish-backed Syrian fighters in Libya have been informed to pack up and prepare themselves to return to Syria, at orders by the Turkish government," (The Independent Arabia, 20/3/2021)). All this indicates Turkey's great response to the political solution path led by envoy Williams.

Media sources reported that Abdul Hamid al-Dabaiba went to Turkey immediately after his selection in Geneva as head of the Libyan government, and these statements and the statements of Yasin Aktay, advisor to the Turkish President confirm this, as Aktay said, "The agreements that Turkey had concluded with the previous Libyan government of reconciliation headed by Al-Sarraj and the Turkish military presence in Libya will not be affected by the choice of the new government. The new interim government does not oppose the agreements nor the Turkish presence in the country." The French newspaper Le Monde said on 8/2/2021: "The commercial interests of the new prime minister make him very close to Turkey, as he is the representative in Libya of the official Turkish state institutions interested in the Libyan market ..."

**Egypt's position:** The President of Egypt, Al-Sisi, personally received in Cairo, Mohammad Al-Menfi, the head of the new Presidential Council, on Thursday, 25/3/2021 (Sky News Arabia, 25/3/2021), in a clear indication of Egypt's support for this political path in Libya, and that Egypt stance on the crisis in Libya has shifted too, to the impact of the progress made by the US diplomacy and the UN envoy, Williams, and perhaps the coincidence in the turn of the two countries' positions, (Turkey and Egypt), bears a clear indication that the two countries refer to one source. The new leaders of Libya were keen to visit the two regional actors in the Libyan arena, namely Egypt and Turkey, which implement the American policy there, each according to its role. On 18/2/2021, Egyptian President Al-Sisi received the head of the new Libyan government, Abdel-Hamid al-Dabaiba, "so he renewed his

congratulations to the new Libyan leadership and prepared to provide it with full support. It was agreed to exchange visits at the level of executives and to consult on all sectors," Dabaiba said: "Libya, the government and people, aspire to establish a comprehensive partnership with Egypt with the aim of reproducing successful examples of its inspiring development experience that was achieved during the past years under the leadership of the President." (Al-Hurra 18/2/2021)).

**The position of Al-Maghreb trio (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia)**, which are the active regional states in Libya, they have declared their support for the new executive authority in Libya. The King of Morocco sent his assurance to the new President of the Presidency Council ("Morocco's usual support for all measures and efforts you are making to address the challenges facing Libya in order to make this delicate stage a success ... he congratulated Muhammad Al-Manfi for the confidence he has enjoyed in serving his country in this crucial transitional phase." (Anatolia 31/3/2021)). Tunisia's Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi and his Algerian counterpart, Sabri Boukadoum, met on 1/4/2021 in Tunisia and discussed a number of international and regional issues, especially the Libyan file, stressing the "importance of supporting the new executive authority for the success of the Libyan political track on the horizon of the upcoming elections in a way that preserves the unity of this brother country and its immunity" (Anatolia 2/4/2021). The Algerian foreign minister had renewed his country's opposition to "the presence of any foreign forces on Libyan soil." And he stressed, in a press statement, "the importance of ensuring security in Libya by unifying security institutions" (The Independent Arabia, 20/3/2021).

These three active countries in the Libyan arena on behalf of the Europeans, especially Britain, have been forced to recognize the executive authority that America formed in Libya, similar to the countries that work for it, and to give themselves an opportunity in this transitional stage to work to support European agents, because America's success in Libya and its establishment in it means expanding in North Africa to reach those countries and threatening the European agents, especially Britain, and this is the first time that America has entered a North African country for many decades.

**Positions of European countries:** None of the European countries showed negative attitudes towards the new executive authority in Libya, and their positions are as follows:

1- The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, visited Tripoli and met with Al-Manfi and Dabaiba on 4/4/2021. He announced on his Twitter account: "The EU stands by the Libyan people and its new leadership. We are ready to increase our support to a unified, sovereign, stable and prosperous Libya." This is the first visit of a European official after the formation of the new national unity government. He said in a press conference, "We want to support you to build your country, but on the condition that all mercenaries and soldiers must leave the country; we encourage elections to be held on time and we want to support you more," said Michel. He added that, "stability, security and irregular migration are important subjects." (Anadolu 4/4/2021). The High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy in the European Union, Josep Borrell, said: "The military presence and the flow of mercenaries on the Libyan territories has increased in the last year," considering that "the IRINI mission has achieved tangible results in monitoring violations of the embargo imposed on Libya, which contributed to the positive steps that the Libyans achieved by forming a government of national unity. A few days ago, the European Union extended the period of the IRINI maritime operation to monitor the Libyan coasts for an additional two years until 2023. (The Independent Arabia, 20/3/2021)

2- The foreign ministers of Italy, France and Germany arrived - today, Thursday - the Libyan capital, Tripoli, as part of a European mission aimed at opening dialogue channels with the new government ... And German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas - upon his arrival in Tripoli - "he said that the progress Libya has witnessed is one of the few shining light points in foreign policy over the past year, adding that when the Libyans manage their future in their own hands again, only then will the ceasefire turn into real peace and reconciliation," stressing on "monitoring the arms embargo on the parties. He stressed that "the withdrawal of foreign and mercenary forces is a prerequisite for preparing for the upcoming elections" (Al-Jazeera Net, 25/3/2021).

With all these European positions that Britain is absent from, it is clearly evident that Europe agrees on the condition of this American solution, which is to ensure the exit of foreign forces from Libya, specifically Turkish and Russian, especially since Europe was aware of the extent of the confusion of its policy caused by the Turkish and Russian presence in Libya and the complications resulting from that. Its IRINI maritime mission was monitoring the interior and exterior to Libya.

**As for the British position**, it was mixed with confusion and cunning at the same time:

1- (British Prime Minister Boris Johnson made a phone call with his new Libyan counterpart, Abdel Hamid Dabaiba, on Friday, congratulating him on his appointment, and renewing the UK's support for the political process in Libya, according to what was reported by Anadolu Agency and added, "They agreed to stay in close contact in the coming months as the interim government prepares for national elections later this year" (Middle East Monitor, 12/2/2021)). This was more than a week after Dabaiba was elected, indicating its confusion.

2- In Johnson's comment on Jordan's proposal to the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo on Libya, (British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said during a visit to Madrid: "The problem is that there is no effective government in Libya that controls its territory. There is no Libyan army that can be supported by the international community actively". Hammond added: "The first condition must be the establishment of a national unity government, and then the international community must urgently rally around that government and ensure that it has the means to deal with terrorism posed by the hardliners." (Sky News Arabic, 20/2/2021)). It is clear from his words that Britain was not part of the American plans that had produced the election of a president to the Presidency Council and a head of the national unity government ... and this is another confusion!

3- It is keeping pace with America after its feeling of powerlessness to bypass America in Libya at the present time, and therefore it is in the midst of the great current in favour of the political path that has become led by America and America's urgency to implement. (The American Ambassador Richard Norland, mentioned via Twitter, considered that the House of Representatives vote granting confidence to the new interim government "Swift action on the part of Libyan leaders is needed to fund repairs in the electricity sector and other key areas – HoR confirmation of the new interim government is urgently required so it can get on with the job." (Asharq Al-Awsat 7/3/2021)). The British ambassador, in the midst of this trend, according to the same source, was forced to tweet in line with the American statement (and Nicholas Hopton, the British ambassador to Libya, joined the list of those calling for a session to grant confidence to the government of Dabaiba, and said in a brief statement via Twitter, the evening before yesterday, it is important that the parliament session convenes soon to vote on confidence in the results of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Geneva, and to support Libya on the road to a better future).

4- From all this it is clear that Britain became in great embarrassment in the face of the progress made by the American diplomacy and the UN envoy, Williams, and that it has no choice but to swim with the current, so it instructed its followers in Tripoli to give a smooth handover of power to al-Dabaiba government, and this represents a political defeat for Britain in Libya that neither it nor its followers can rectify it, neither through negotiations in Bouznika in Morocco nor by obstructing the vote, and what the UN envoy Stephanie Williams called "corrupt political money." She said, ("Those who try to provide money to the participants in the dialogue will be classified as hindering it, and an investigation will be opened into information about paying bribes and buying votes." She indicated that "there is a code of conduct regarding the interference of corrupt political money." (Asharq Al-Awsat 17/11/2020)). These suspicions of corrupt money are an indication of the role of the UAE and its attempts to influence the selection of the members of the Libyan Dialogue Forum (Al-Jazeera Net, 16/11/2020).

**Third: As for how America succeeded in pulling the Libyan rug from under Britain's feet, this cannot be understood except according to the following facts:**

1- **Influence inside Libya:** With the end of the British agent Gaddafi in 2011, the barriers in front of America were broken and it gained influence in Libya, and this influence began to grow, so the control of the American agent Haftar in eastern Libya was an indication that America owns half of Libya, then John Bolton, the security advisor in the Trump administration, authorized Haftar's attack on Tripoli in 2019, with the support of the American president during his contact with Haftar. America announced its rejection of a draft resolution that Britain had submitted at that date to stop Haftar's campaign against Tripoli. However, this campaign failed and he was removed from Tripoli and nearly fell had it not been for Turkey, which declared its support and aid for the Tripoli government headed by al-Sarraj, stopping its support for the storming of Sirte and Al-Jufra, Haftar's strategic strongholds, which if it fell in the hands of al-Sarraj government then Haftar would fall. Turkey asked al-Sarraj to stop this and to negotiate.

America wanted to put al-Sarraj's government between two options: the first was to make it a hostage to Turkish support, so it would fall into the arms of Erdogan, so Turkey would loosen its

European restrictions from it, and the second is for Turkey to be able to access the "moderate Islamic" groups that form the backbone of power in Tripoli and Misrata and implement on them the Syrian scenario. Those militias affiliated with it take its command, which leads to the removal of fat from this solid nerve of the strength of al-Sarraj's government, thus preventing Britain from benefiting from that nerve, especially since these groups have overflowed their heart with passion for Erdogan! It seems that the two things have been achieved by America together in an acceptable manner, albeit not completely, which indicates the ease of contacts that the UN envoy, Williams, had with the heads of municipalities and youth and military institutions, there is no difference in this between America's affiliated east and Britain's affiliated west until those days. That is, the American efforts to take leadership in the political process have proceeded with fewer obstacles because Turkey was preparing the conditions more for it in western Libya, as a result, America's influence in Libya was increasing at the expense of penetration in the West, while the influence of Britain and Europe was shrinking even in the western region.

And America has now achieved what it wants from the graduation of a new leadership batch from a new presidential council and a new government, and therefore it is not unlikely that America will depend less on Haftar except to the extent necessary to use him as a tool to pressure politicians to implement its order, and it may be his end, if it's political success continues, especially since it did not assign any position for him in the new interim government, and he aspires to be the minister of defense in it or commander of the army. But the new prime minister retained his defense position and the Presidential Council retained the position of commander-in-chief of the army.

**2- The change of the administration in America:** The advent of the Biden administration and the defeat of the Trump administration had a tremendous effect in accelerating America's withdrawal of the Libyan rug from under Britain's feet. And although the Biden administration had reaped the fruits of what the Trump administration planted in Libya, the change of administration in America was decisive in accelerating Libyan transitions, so the Libyan Dialogue Forum was elected to the Presidency Council and the National Unity Government, nearly two weeks after Biden assumed the presidency in Washington, and the formation of the Libyan government was about two months after its assumption, and the impact of the change in the American administration was as follows.

#### **A- Returning to the Allies and Recruiting Them Against China and Russia:**

The Biden administration announced that it had returned to its European allies after the Trump administration's tensions, (Biden, accompanied by his deputy Kamala Harris, said during a brief speech at the State Department's headquarters that "America is back and diplomacy is back." (Russian Sputnik, 4/2/2021), and Biden's slogan "America is back" became an alternative Trump's slogan "America first" was repeated by the US Secretary of State in Brussels, saying: (We wanted to come here with a central mission: to reaffirm our commitment to NATO, our alliances, and our partnership with the European Union and our main allies ... I repeat: America has returned in terms of commitment to its alliances and partnerships. (Euro News Arabia, 26/3/2021)). America is returning to its European allies in order to recruit them against China and against Russia, and this has a great reflection on the Libyan crisis, in that the American political solution to the crisis in Libya will leave some Europeans influence in exchange for a greater goal, which is to put them on its side against China and Russia, which is what the American statements say:

(US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken discussed with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio today, Tuesday, the files of China, Afghanistan and Libya, during a meeting with the foreign ministers of NATO countries in Brussels. At the end of the meeting, the US State Department spokesman, Ned Price, stated that "the two parties exchanged views on the problems that China and the future of NATO represent in Afghanistan and the most effective ways to support political reforms in Libya". According to the spokesman, the defense ministers of the two countries agreed to continue the work between Washington and Rome on global problems and expressed their support for the development of "closer cooperation between the United States and the European Union." (ART 23/3/2021)).

With all this it is clear that the change of administration in America was a decisive reason for accelerating the political transformation in Libya in favour of America...

#### **B- The deterioration of European relations with Britain after the implementation of Brexit:**

The arduous negotiations for Britain's exit from the European Union with an agreement were a reason to sow discord between Britain and European countries. English selfishness appeared brutally during

those negotiations and produced European intransigence that is closer to a fine and punishment. The rift between them is the most prominent feature of post-Brexit relations, and this appeared in Britain's courtesy to Turkey as it challenged France and Europe in the eastern Mediterranean, and appeared more in the Coronavirus vaccine crisis with the British AstraZeneca with Europe, and this made British relations with the European Union countries in a situation that is closer to a crisis and convulsion. Therefore, the foreign ministers of France and Germany visited Libya after the formation of the national unity government, accompanied by the Italian foreign minister and not the British foreign minister, as was the custom in the European International Action pre-Brexit. This means that the deterioration of Britain's relations with the European Union countries led the latter to keep pace with America in the path of a solution in Libya, so European coordination with Britain was absent, and Europe did not stand with Britain to form a barrier in Libya against the American moves, which ultimately led Britain to find itself alone in front of the great American current, Britain bowed to the American wave and asked its agents to hand over power in Tripoli.

**Fourth: From this it appears that America has won the current round of conflict with the Europeans over an Islamic country** that is considered the richest in oil in Africa. And it is drooling to make investments in it and plunder its wealth. It had announced its support for Haftar in the hope that it would secure the flow of oil if he seized power in his attempt to seize Tripoli in April 2019, as mentioned by its former president Trump, who made a phone call with him, which he announced on 19/4/2019, in which he was clear (Trump confirms Haftar's "essential" role in combating terrorism and securing oil. (Deutsche Welle 19/4/2019)), then it continued its steps until it dominated the Presidency Council and the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, the American-European conflict will remain unceasingly in the foreseeable future, since Britain has an old political center, and also other European countries, such as France and Italy, have interests and presence through investing companies.

It is painful for this Islamic country, like other Islamic countries, to be an arena for conflict between the colonialists to extend their influence and plunder wealth! At a time when the rulers in Muslim countries are linked to this or that colonizer, and they are not thinking of getting rid of this humiliating link! The duty of the Ummah, especially the sincere of its son, is to take the lead in political action and make every effort to change these rulers, to overthrow foreign countries that support them, and to establish the state that implements the law of Allah and carries it to the world and returns the wealth to its people and distributes it to the sons of the Ummah so that no needy or poor people remains in it. ... it is the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) state on the method of prophethood which Allah (swt) promised, Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ﴾ **“Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them”** [An-Nur: 55].

Which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) gave its glad-tidings after the oppressive rule in which we live under, by his (ﷺ) saying: «ثُمَّ تَكُونُ مُلْكًا جَبْرِيَّةً فَتَكُونُ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَكُونَ ثُمَّ يَرْفَعَهَا إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَرْفَعَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ خِلَافَةً عَلَىٰ مِنْهَاجٍ» **“...then there will be oppressive kingship for as long as Allah wills, then he will remove it when He wills, and then there will be Khilafah upon the Prophetic method” and then he remained silent.**” [Narrated by Ahmad from An-Nu'man bin Bashir].

**25 Sha'ban 1442 AH**

**7/4/2021 CE**