

Statement for the Record
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Thank you, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and Members of the Committee for inviting me to discuss the situation in Libya today and the Administration's response.

Since the 2011 revolution, millions of Libyans have expressed high hopes that the country will seize the opportunity provided by the overthrow of the Qadhafi regime to build a new state, based on strong democratic institutions and providing a secure, stable framework that would put Libya's vast energy resources to work on behalf of the Libyan people.

Instead, Libya's new political institutions and leaders have failed to meet Libya's challenges. Despite the efforts of many brave Libyans as well as the active engagement of the United States and our international partners, too many of Libya's power brokers and militia commanders have rejected principles of dialogue, consensus building, and compromise in favor of pursuit of narrow-minded interests and a scramble for control of Libya's resources. The weak central government, ravaged by 42 years of Qadhafi's misrule, has proven incapable of providing security, governance, or access to economic opportunity.

In the absence of capable government, opportunistic criminals, militias, and terrorist groups are battling for control. Internecine clashes have been fueled by domestic weapons stockpiles and flows of fighters and weapons as a result of the

government's inability to secure Libya's long, porous borders. In recent months, hundreds of Libyan civilians have died as a result of the conflict, and the UN reports that a quarter million people inside Libya have been displaced or fled since recent clashes began. Critical Libyan public infrastructure, including Libya's major airports in Tripoli and Benghazi, has also been targeted by rival militias. Indeed, the conflict in parts of the country is best understood primarily as a struggle over resources and power, and only secondarily over ideology.

Clearly, Libya cannot move forward without addressing its lawlessness and violence, and it cannot address the violence without achieving a basic political framework for the path forward. But Libya's political transition has stalled, and in recent weeks the government itself has fractured into two competing groups based in different cities – Tripoli and Tobruk – even as most of the international community has been forced by the violence to leave the country. As fighting escalated in the Tripoli neighborhood where our embassy is located, the United States decided to suspend operations temporarily and withdraw U.S personnel from the country. Ambassador Jones and a small team have relocated to our embassy in Malta, from where they continue to carry out their diplomatic and assistance duties.

It remains in the United States' interest to help remove Libya from this cycle of violence. We want to see the fighting end and competing factions commit to settling their differences through a process of dialogue and negotiation. In fact, despite the violence, we do see a potential path forward. There are still many in Libya who understand their country needs an inclusive government that shares power and resources in a fair and transparent way. We are working closely with the United Nations, the European Union, and with other European partners to

advance a unified approach, encouraging all Libyans to adopt basic principles of non-violence and commit to a democratic state. We are working to promote these principles directly with Libyans from across the country and the political spectrum. We and our allies also have a number of coordinated assistance programs designed to help Libyans build a secure, democratic, and prosperous state that continue to operate through local staff and existing networks on the ground .

Libyan spoilers need to understand that there are consequences for violence and for actions that threaten Libya's democratic transition. Consistent with that, we were able to work with the members of the UN Security Council two weeks ago to secure unanimous approval of a new resolution, UNSCR 2174, that provides for targeted UN sanctions against those who undermine the political transition process.

We also are reaching out to Libya's neighbors and to others in the region and beyond who have a strong interest in seeing a stable, secure, and democratic Libya. Our goal is to seek these countries' support in pushing all Libyan factions into a productive political process. Positive engagement by regional actors can help Libya. The Tunis Process, a neighbors group made up of Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Chad, Niger and Sudan, meets regularly to coordinate engagement with Libya. In August, the group met in Cairo for its fourth ministerial and called for non-interference in Libya's internal affairs and support for a political process to resolve the Libyan conflict. These developments are encouraging.

It is vital that we continue to pursue this avenue. Libya's location means that its challenges pose a grave threat to the overall security of the Sahel, North Africa, and the greater Mediterranean. Terrorist groups continue to take advantage of the lawlessness to build their capabilities and neither the U.S. nor Libya's friends and

neighbors will accept any attempt to use Libya as a base to launch attacks against our interests in the region and the world. Accordingly, while opposing outside intervention in Libya by any foreign power, we continue to seek ways to counter those who seek to use Libya or Libyans in the cause of terrorism.

Envisioning a peaceful and prosperous Libya can be challenging, particularly when the trajectory is negative. But if Libya could overcome its discord, it has unique advantages that could support the advancement of the democratic transition process and facilitate building the state. If Libya's political factions were to work together instead of fighting, they could boost oil and other exports to capacity and use the proceeds to invest in Libya's infrastructure, its health and education systems, and most importantly, its people. With a population of only six million, Libya offers enormous opportunities. Supporting a political resolution to the current impasse, so that we can advance Libyans' efforts to build a democratic state, remains one of the United States' top foreign policy goals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer questions from the Committee.