

**Statement for the Record
Ambassador Anne W. Patterson
Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs**

**House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa
June 25, 2014**

Thank you, Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, Members of the Subcommittee, for inviting me to discuss the situation in Libya and the Administration's response.

Libya's democratic transition faces a number of significant challenges that will require intensive work by both Libyans and their international partners over a long period. Achieving and maintaining a stable democracy that provides Libyans with an effective government, a secure environment for Libyans and foreigners alike, and economic opportunity will not be easy. But the stakes for us, as well as for the Libyan people, are substantial.

Libya has the largest coastline of any country on the Mediterranean, and transportation routes and access to nearly the entire Middle East. If Libya does not develop a functioning and stable democratic government, it could transmit instability well beyond its immediate borders to threaten three vital areas: the Sahel, North Africa and the Mediterranean.

To help Libya achieve the promise heralded by its people throwing off the chains of the Qadhafi regime, we are engaged in four major ongoing areas of effort. First, as the recent arrest of Abu Khattala for his alleged role in the murder of four Americans in Benghazi highlights, we are continuing vigorous counter-terrorism

efforts. Second, through our diplomacy and direct assistance, we are working to strengthen security institutions and build governance capacity. Third, we are supporting the democratic transition processes through elections, constitution drafting, and national dialogue. Fourth, we are seeking to promote economic development so that the private sector in Libya becomes a significant driver of stability. Each of these efforts faces substantial challenges.

Libya's Challenges

While Libya does not face the daunting sectarian strife that plagues some Arab countries in transition, it lacks many crucial governmental capacities and must build a modern infrastructure from the ground up. Four decades of mismanagement under Qadhafi caused significant damage. Libya lacks modern governmental institutions and a professional bureaucracy capable of meeting the needs and expectations of the Libyan people.

The violence in Libya is alarming. It has spread from the East to the West, and has grown through the early months of 2014. The government has been unable to stabilize the country or stop the now-routine killings and kidnappings. The Libyan people, after bravely coming together to overthrow a brutal dictator, must now live with violence exacerbated by the presence of more than one hundred destabilizing militias that serve under no common authority and which live under no overriding system of laws or law enforcement structures.

On average over the past year, one to two people have been killed every day in eastern Libya. Judges, politicians and civic leaders have been murdered for trying to do their jobs. The security vacuum has also permitted militias and other groups

dissatisfied with the central government to target critical oil infrastructure and to negatively influence political developments. As a result, Libya's oil production – the sole source of government revenue – has fallen to as low as 10 percent of capacity or about 150,000 barrels per day. These disruptions have severely hampered Libya's economy and rippled through the entire country, amounting to up to \$30 billion in lost revenues that could have gone to financing the transition.

Political Steps Forward

All of this has created a situation in Libya that is unstable, and which threatens to destabilize even further if its leaders fail to come together for the benefit of the Libyan people. The Libyan government has been unable to provide adequate security and services for its people; confidence in the government is low and its institutions are facing a legitimacy crisis that threatens the country's democratic transition. Deepening political divisions between Islamist and non-Islamist political elements vying for power have compounded the instability. Although some of the myriad militia groups provide policing services to communities, they have not been integrated into a national system to provide security for Libyans overall, and because they are not integrated, have different constituencies, different goals, and are not undertaking their work under a legal framework or system of oversight, their overall effect is incredibly destabilizing.

Libya's political factions need to find a path through all of this to build institutions. To facilitate that process, Secretary Kerry has asked Ambassador David Satterfield to work closely with UK Special Envoy Jonathan Powell and with key Libyan stakeholders, in coordination with the UN and international envoys. We are urging Libyans to agree to general principles to guide the remainder of the political

transition and we are stressing that political differences must be settled through dialogue and compromise, not violence.

As this political dialogue progresses, we're also working with Libya, its neighbors, and the international community to strengthen Libya's internal security while mitigating the extent that instability or loose weapons that now saturate Libya can leak across its borders. As we've seen in other parts of the region, one country's instability can quickly spread over shared borders and destabilize a neighbor. We have had successful programs in isolating and separating out Libya's residual chemical weapons precursors. We are also engaged with the European Union and with neighboring countries to enhance efforts against traffickers, smugglers, and terrorists seeking to take advantage of Libya's large and historically porous borders.

Additionally, we are participating in frameworks with other countries – the Paris Ministerial matrices and the Rome Ministerial compacts – to coordinate assistance in key areas, such as good governance and enhanced security, and we are having regular discussions with the U.S. private sector on steps needed to rebuild Libya's economy and its institutions. These initiatives will help construct the foundation for further progress in Libya, but their ultimate success will depend on Libya finding mechanisms to turn national dialogue into the development of a constitution and a system of governance that is inclusive, democratic, and stable.

Today in Libya, voters went to the polls to elect a new legislature, the Council of Representatives, which will replace the General National Congress. Today's elections are a milestone in Libya's transition and Libya's continued commitment

to democracy. In addition, Libya has successfully held over 70 municipal elections in the past year, promoting democratic development at the local level.

Another encouraging sign is that following national elections in February, Libya's Constitution Drafting Assembly has begun drafting a new constitution. This is a difficult process but we're hopeful that with support from the international community, the drafters will create a new constitution that will include the separation of powers and will respect the dignity of all Libyans, including minorities and women. We would like this process to lead to the creation of a strong civil state with strong institutions.

It was also very encouraging to see a political crisis defused peacefully earlier this month when the Supreme Court in Libya ruled in favor of one of two competing prime ministers – and the losing party vacated the Prime Minister's office he had inhabited only a week earlier. This demonstrates the capacity of the Libyan people and their institutions to overcome political challenges.

Assistance from the USG and International Partners

Madam Chairman, transitions to democracies are notoriously difficult endeavors, but we have an opportunity to support Libya's transition in a productive direction; moreover, the majority of Libyans want a close relationship with the United States. The opportunity to stand with this majority will not stay open forever if this majority loses faith in a peaceful and democratic transition.

Let me briefly describe our assistance efforts. The United States is currently providing more than \$100 million in assistance to Libya. We have focused,

together with our European partners, on promoting the basis for a democratic transition, including through support for the development of an independent press, a nascent civil society, and Libya's first free and fair elections in July 2012, as well as those underway today. We have also been providing targeted technical security assistance, such as securing and neutralizing Qadhafi-era chemical weapons stockpiles and reigning in loose conventional weapons. As of early 2014, Libya has been free of all chemical weapons.

Security remains a top priority. As a result, we're working closely with the European Union Border Assistance Mission to train and equip border security officials so that they can effectively manage and secure Libya's porous borders. And we have pledged to train several thousand General Purpose Forces, which will represent a force of well-trained recruits whose job will be to strengthen Libya's capacity to protect the Libyan people as well as ensure its territorial sovereignty. My colleague, Assistant Secretary Chollet, will speak in more detail about the General Purpose Forces.

Our security assistance is designed to help Libya control the rampant violence that has paralyzed the country, and to give the new government the breathing room it needs to regain legitimacy and chart a constructive path forward. This work is necessary to create an environment where democracy, good governance, and a healthy civil society and private sector can take root and thrive.

In his West Point address last month, President Obama emphasized that when this Administration acts overseas on behalf of human dignity and as a matter of national security, we should not expect change to happen overnight. He noted: "That's why we form alliances not just with governments, but also with ordinary

people. For unlike other nations, America is not afraid of individual empowerment, we're strengthened by it. We're strengthened by civil society. We're strengthened by a free press. We're strengthened by striving entrepreneurs and small businesses. We're strengthened by educational exchanges and opportunity for all people, and women and girls.”

Madam Chairman, consistent with this strategic vision we are devoting significant resources to help the Libyan government and civil society groups in their work to lay the foundations of a new democratic society. Our assistance aims to further support inclusive national reconciliation processes, consultative constitution drafting, and healthy election cycles.

While Libya is a wealthy country, it is new to democracy and continues to struggle to build effective institutions. One of our crucial missions is to help the Libyan government develop the capacity to fund and provide services to meet the expectations of its people. This means helping to stand up civil administrators who can ensure the government's bills are paid, the lights turn on and the trash gets picked up on time. This limited capacity contributes to the low confidence most Libyans have in their governing institutions and also has meant that large grants and infrastructure projects that donor countries would like to provide, projects that could alleviate hardships Libyans face day-in-and-day-out, flounder because there's no administrative capacity to carry them out.

The International Partnership for Libya, which Secretary Kerry announced at the Rome Ministerial in March, is designed to ensure that the assistance pledged at the Rome Ministerial in support of Libya's transition is successfully implemented. In another encouraging sign of the international community's commitment, over

forty international delegations participated in this meeting and echoed the Secretary's emphasis on Libya's need for stronger government institutions capable of managing budgets, programs, and personnel as well as improved security.

Conclusion

Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Deutch, I can assure you that we approach our diplomatic engagement with Libya with our eyes wide open. This will be a long-term endeavor but it is in our national security interest to do whatever we can in support of a successful Libyan transition.

Thank you.