

Statement for the Record
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Sub-Committees on the Middle East & North Africa and
Terrorism, Nonproliferation & Trade
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Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Poe, Ranking Member Deutch, Ranking Member Keating, and distinguished members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. foreign policy on Libya.

During my service as Special Envoy for Libya, our policy has centered on promoting the ability of Libyans to maintain a stable, unified, and inclusive government that can both defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups and simultaneously meet the security, economic, and humanitarian needs of the Libyan people.

After 42 years of Muammar Qaddafi's erratic rule and five years since the country cast off his shackles, Libya has made some but not enough progress in reaching these goals. Libya's post-Qaddafi institutions have not provided sufficient stability and opportunity for the Libyan people. But Libyans have made some visible progress against terrorism. And they still have an opportunity to move forward in securing a more functional national transitional government. Libya needs to move forward on both goals: neither objective is sustainable without the other.

Since the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat, Morocco on December 17, 2015, the Government of National Accord (GNA) led by Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj has been a steadfast partner of the United States and the international community against ISIL. A year ago, before the Skhirat Agreement, ISIL was expanding, capturing 90 miles of Mediterranean coastline around the coast city of Sirte – a stone's-throw away from Europe's southern shores.

A year later, the picture looks very different. Now, due to the bravery of GNA-aligned Libyan fighters, supported since this summer by the skill of U.S. forces who have conducted more than 450 airstrikes, coordinated with our Libyan partners, ISIL controls just a few city blocks in Sirte. And its grasp on even this sliver of territory is tenuous. ISIL and other terrorist groups in other parts of Libya have also been pushed back. In Benghazi and in Libya's East, this has been due to sustained efforts by equally brave Libyan fighters. The counter-terrorism terrain remains complex, and the fight is far from over. The gains against ISIL are real.

But they also could be reversible, if Libyans do not come together to participate in the Government of National Accord and to help it perform its work for the Libyan people and to unify against the common threat to all. This is true today for the transitional Government of National Accord. It will be true for the next Libyan government that is formed after the country moves ahead with elections sometime next year or in early 2018.

ISIL has been dramatically weakened through its extensive losses in Sirte and Benghazi, and further losses in Sabratha, Derna, and elsewhere in Libya. Many hundreds of terrorists have died in these battles. But most of those who have not been killed probably have stayed in Libya and gone underground, forming cells elsewhere in the country. We believe they are waiting for opportunities to engage in further attacks in Libya or its neighbors, and if possible to reassert ISIL geographically. Political divisions among Libyans let ISIL in the first time. And unfortunately, Libyans still remain divided. The United States and other countries with a stake in seeing Libya succeed can help them bridge differences and focus on the real enemy, ISIL and other terrorist groups. To keep ISIL and other terrorist groups in Libya on their heels, we must work with the Libyan people and other like-minded countries to help Prime Minister al-Sarraj broaden support for a common political path forward, build a capable government, and unify and professionalize Libya's security forces. The security of Libya and the region and our own national security interests depend on it.

Libya's challenges would be profound for any government, and they are especially difficult for the GNA, which seeks to build consensus and which has to build capacity starting nearly from scratch. The GNA's Presidency Council moved to Tripoli on March 30 where it was welcomed by many Libyans who want an end to the chaos and fighting. Since its arrival the GNA has begun the critical work of rebuilding the Libyan state, but it still faces some opposition in the country and obstacles to its ability to govern. The potential for renewed fighting among Libyans remains a very real concern. To turn their attention to the fight against their common enemy, ISIL, we believe it essential that Libyans choose to make the national reconciliation they envisioned in the Political Agreement a reality.

Durable and broad political reconciliation remain essential for the Government of National Accord – or any other future Libyan government – to function. While the House of Representatives (HoR) voted on January 25 to approve the entire Political Agreement, with the exception of one article regarding who would be the head of the military, and Prime Minister al-Sarraj's nine-

member GNA Presidency Council, it has never endorsed a GNA Cabinet or acted to amend the country's Constitutional Declaration. Libyans need to agree on a Cabinet so that Libyans in all parts of the country – east, west and south – can join in rebuilding their nation. It is critical that the international community remain aligned and speak with one voice in support of the GNA and the Libyan Political Agreement, and continue to support one Libyan-led and UN-facilitated political process.

The United States has offered its strong support to the Political Agreement and the GNA. A unity government that brings disparate parties and armed factions under one roof is the best way forward for Libya. International support for the GNA has consistently been strong; the United States, United Nations, EU, Arab League, and virtually all of the key European and Middle Eastern countries have expressed their support for the GNA, as echoed through adoption of UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2259 which endorsed the GNA as the sole legitimate government of Libya.

We see no military solution to Libya's political divisions, no sustainable means to dominate by force. Sustainable progress will only be possible through Libyans addressing political differences. In the near term, intensive mediation to ensure the political process moves forward will be critical. We will continue to encourage Libyan parties to form a unified civilian command under the Political Agreement for unified military forces which operate under a form of joint command which reflects the country's diversity and regions and promotes security for all civilians.

Libya will need to build integrated military forces on a national basis, incorporating professional military personnel who functioned as professionals during the Qaddafi period, and including a range of qualified Libyan soldiers. In Tripoli, the GNA must develop a reliable, professional force to replace the patchwork of militias that continue to provide security on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis in Tripoli. We and other countries will support Prime Minister al-Sarraj as he builds the Presidential Guard under the leadership of Brigadier General Nakua to improve security in Tripoli. I have met Nakua and found him impressive and ready to take on the challenge. The next step is to select professional, vetted personnel and advance to training and equipping this force. The international community should partner with and provide assistance to this important institution.

The Libyans also need international support as they work to reform their economy and to strengthen their economic institutions. Without such steps, Libya's current economic course is unsustainable, and risks leading to further economic and humanitarian crisis that threatens to make Libya's existing security problems far worse.

To counter these risks, the GNA and the Central Bank of Libya, the Audit Bureau, and the National Oil Corporation must join together to stabilize and rebuild Libya's economy. For this reason, the United States helped bring Libyans together for focused economic meetings in London and Rome in October and November. The Libyans understand they need to finalize and operationalize a budget and address the growing disparity between the official and black market currency exchange rates. There are both monetary and fiscal reforms that would make a difference. But the most important step they could take to do this would be get oil production and exports back up to levels that can fund a reasonable budget and halt the rapid depletion of Libya's foreign reserves. This is achievable, if those with control over these resources choose the right path to turn Libya's oil-fields and pipelines back on.

In keeping with UN Security Council resolutions, the United States and other countries will continue to take vigorous action to prevent attempts to conduct transactions in Libyan oil outside legitimate channels. Such transactions are illegal under Libyan as well as international law. They invite massive corruption. They also would cause great harm to Libya's economy, risk fracturing the country, and could spark civil conflict over resources. Libyans could instead choose to cooperate with one another to produce oil, and work together to build a government which ensures that Libya's wealth is spent to benefit all of its people, transparently, and with effective controls to counter corruption and abuse. The United States and many other countries, as well as the IMF and World Bank among others are ready and willing to help – but the Libyan people need their leaders to take the first steps on the economic issues in order for help from others to make a difference.

Looking ahead, we also should support Libyans to build consensus on a calendar for a Constitutional referendum and legislative and executive elections in 2017. The Political Agreement is a transitional roadmap, and we are at the half-way point of the GNA's intended span. The Political Agreement's proponents and detractors alike agree on the need to move ahead to a new, elected government.

We must help them work together toward realizing a stable, peaceful transition that includes national elections.

In 2017, we will also need to support the Libyans as they stabilize post-ISIL Sirte. The Administration recently amended its FY 2017 budget request to Congress to provide the resources necessary to support U.S. engagement in the effort to counter ISIL in the region, including in Libya. For Libya, the Administration is seeking \$148.0 million in FY 2017 foreign assistance to provide the United States government with the flexibility necessary to respond quickly to Libya's stabilization requirements in places like Sirte given the rapid progress GNA aligned forces have made to eradicate ISIL from the city and surrounding areas. Our foreign assistance in Libya advances stabilization in key communities, expands the security envelope east and south, and supports efforts to counter ISIL in key strongholds and vulnerable areas while also targeting the group's ability to recruit foreign fighters, obtain financing, and spread its message globally. These resources are critical to advancing our national security interests in Libya.

We must remain steadfast in our support for our Libyan counter-ISIL partners after Sirte is liberated. We cannot allow a vacuum in which violent extremists re-emerge. Stabilizing Sirte post-ISIL will require a collective and coordinated effort. We and partner nations, in coordination with UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) are working with the GNA to support a Libyan plan to stabilize Sirte after ISIL's defeat, including how we can help the Libyans with removal of UXO and IEDs. We will need to work together to address the return of IDPs to Sirte – virtually the entire population of approximately 100,000, in a safe way.

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Chairman Poe, and members of the Committees: as I described at the outset today, the U.S. government is deeply engaged with Libya because we have shared national security interests, including defeating ISIL. The United States also supports the aspirations of the Libyan people for a united, inclusive, and responsive national government capable of overcoming the country's significant challenges and political divisions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering any questions you have.