



Libya in Transition--Implications and Opportunities for Britain

An Africa APPG event on Libya in the House of Commons co-hosted by the Royal Africa Society and Libya-Analysis.com and consisting of 2 Closed Briefings for MPs and one Open Session for MPs and public

INTRODUCTION: Winning the peace in Libya is a core British national interest. A power vacuum in Libya would have deleterious effects on illegal migration to Europe, combating AQIM, European energy security, investment opportunities and thus European economic recovery. The present British government has, therefore, committed itself to facilitating an efficient transition of power from the NTC to a legitimate constitutional government in Libya based on the rule of law, combating dangerous radicalism, honouring existing contracts, nurturing civil society and the private sector, etc.

Despite the TNC's myriad public pronouncements in the international press, the actual process of the Transition is highly opaque. The formation of a new cabinet (set to be announced before November 22nd) will appease some but not all protests from local militias which feel sidelined from power. Although the eight month period to elections for the constituent assembly was initiated by the Declaration of Liberation on October 23rd, it is unclear how the NTC is taking steps to prepare for elections or is actually governing Libya in the interim.

The NTC is merely an umbrella organization while much of liberated Libyan territory is controlled by spontaneous local councils and militias -- some of which have spontaneously feuded. What national institutions still exist in Libya (Great Man Made River, NOC, Central Bank, health system, etc.) are either in total disarray or are being run by officials connected with the Qaddafi regime. Local protests against officials seen as corrupt or connected with the Qaddafi family have hindered attempts to quickly 'return to work' in Libya's core governance functions. Regional groupings -- notably in Misrata, Tripoli, and Jebel Nafusa -- wish for a greater share of NTC governance which they feel has been monopolized by Cyrenaicans and Diaspora technocrats. The role of Islam and the state sector in the new Libya are subjects of wide ranging disagreements and confusion. The most contentious popular debate in post-Gaddafi Libya concerns the role that former regime officials and government bureaucrats should be allowed to play in public life.

Moreover, the different factions in Libya's current political landscape tend to be organized locally rather than ideologically. Under these circumstances, Western policy makers must attempt to assess both where Libya is headed and how Western 'assistance' can help promote transparent governance and capacity building in the short term, a legitimate democratic transition in the medium term, and economic and human development in the long term.



These briefings seek to address the role the EU, UK, UN, and other actors can play and are playing in Libya's transitional phase, while simultaneously looking at how the transition in Libya is likely to affect Libya's political and economic relationships with the EU, Middle East, UK, and Sub-Saharan African countries. As a result of its historic relationship with Libya, the UK can choose to play a special role in areas of capacity building, security, investment of unfrozen Libyan sovereign assets, anti-corruption, and reintegration of Libya into the world system.

Closed Briefing Sessions for MPs

1. Tuesday, November 29th, 11am-12:30pm, The House of Commons, Meeting Room M:

The State of the 'Transition' and Britain's role -- This briefing will summarize recent NTC initiatives (such as the formation of the interim cabinet) and their effects on the situation on the ground in Libya. The constitutional and practical aspects of the 'Transition' will be explained in depth. NTC plans for jump starting Libya's economic recovery and appeasing divergent local factions will be discussed, commenting on their relative chances of success or failure. Special attention will be given to low-cost, high impact ways the British government may help the NTC in fields like capacity building in the ministries and preparation for elections. **The Role of Islamists in post-Gaddafi Libyan politics will also be addressed.** The take-home message is that moderate Islamists will most certainly have a role to play in Libya's transition and it is wise for Britain, the US, and the UN to work with moderate and popular Islamist figures, like Abdul Hakim Belhadj, or risk a rise of factionalism which could culminate in the Qataris (who disproportionately financed the NTC in the early days) becoming the exclusive patron of the Islamists, thus leading to an oppositional political climate.

2. Wednesday December 7th, 10am-11:30am The House of Commons, Meeting Room M:

Business Opportunities for British Companies in Libya-- As a result of Britain's historic relationship with Libya, the UK can choose to play a special role in areas of capacity building, security, banking, investment of unfrozen Libyan sovereign assets (especially via the reconstituted Libyan Investment Authority), anti-corruption, and reintegration of Libya into the world system. HMG must take key political steps if it wants to help British businesses gain access to key interim government and private sector decision makers. In this session, representatives of the UK's business community will discuss their desiderata. An emphasis will be place on the strategic sectors of banking, hydrocarbons and reconstruction.



Open Session:

3: Monday December 12th, 7-9pm, House of Commons, Committee Room 9

Libya's New Role in the World-- This briefing will investigate how the demise of the Gaddafi regime's interventionist policies towards sub-Saharan Africa, illegal migrants to Europe, and the funding of non-state actors will affect the international landscape in these domains. Additionally, the Libyan Interim Government's new foreign policy priorities will be considered and linkages between domestic politics inside Libya and Libya's place in the world will be explored. How will a democratic Libya with a vibrant civil society conduct its foreign policy? Conversely, what would Libyan foreign policy look like if the country became mired in internal strife among the militias, Islamists, Old Guard, returned Diaspora technocrats, formerly unemployed revolutionaries, and nascent central authorities? These big questions will be addressed in a format accessible to both specialists and casual observers.

The session will begin with a general introduction by the Royal Africa Society and Libya-Analysis.com framing the event for the MPs and the public.

This will be followed by a few short speeches:

Peter Henshaw (Libya Analyst at the International Assessment Staff, Privy Council Office of Canada)

Reem Maziq (Private Equity Manager and co-founder of Women for Libya)

TBD (possibly an Oil analyst and a political scientist)

RSVP: Although RSVP is not necessary your RSVP to Jason Pack at waahidannas@gmail.com would be greatly appreciated as it helps us accommodate for the likely number of guests.