



Statement

Committee on International Relations

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0128

Statement by

A Omar Turbi

**Expert - U.S Libya Relations
Before the Committee on International Relations
U.S. House of Representatives
Libya at a Crossroads: A Faltering Transition
Wednesday, June 25th, 2014**

I am honored to have the opportunity to provide testimony to your distinguished committee on the subject- **Libya at a Crossroads: A Faltering Transition.**

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the continued support by the United States of the Libyan people. If it were not for the bold push by the United States to force Libyan dictator Muamar Qaddafi from power in 2011, Libya and the Libyan people would not have been liberated.

It has become abundantly clear, three years after the fall of the Qaddafi regime; the Libyan people have not been able to establish viable democratic institutions, and a functioning state. The crisis at present has reached alarming levels and threatens the peace and security, not only of Libya but also of North Africa, the Sahel countries and the Mediterranean. The prospects of an intractable crisis are looming, and Libya is on the brink of becoming a failed state at the center of a critical region of the World.

Many current and former senior Libyan government officials recognize the requirement for international intervention.

Today the Libyan people are electing a new 200 member legislative body to replace the outgoing General National Congress (GNC) of which term had expired in February this year. Although many Libyans are optimistic at the prospects of a new beginning, I am pessimistic due to anticipated low voter turn out due to lack of public security, poor planning and the possibility of more of the same of less qualified new members of a new GNC.

The Libyan people are grateful for the on going engagement by the United States to help contain further crisis. Myself, and a group of prominent Libyan experts submitted an initiative to Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki Moon on June 5th, 2014, some of its content is provided below. Although we are pleased that the UN has recently undertaken steps along the lines of our proposed initiative, more effort by the U.S as a powerful member of the Security Council is needed for effective UN intervention.

Page Two

June 25th, 2014

Statement

A Omar Turbi

Expert – U.S Libya Relation

House Committee on International Relation

Libya at a Crossroads: A Faltering Transition

The mission of such intervention, however, must be under the UN and in accordance to UN resolutions adopted in 2011 under chapter 7. **It must be noted that during the course of drafting and planning the subject initiative we spoke with many Libyan government officials, current and former holders of senior positions, former prime ministers, and deputy prime ministers, members of the General National Congress (GNC) and Libyan Ambassadors abroad. The vast majority who reviewed the draft and final version of the initiative have applauded its content and endorsed the call for IMMEDIATE AND ACTIVE INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN THE ONGOING LIBYA CRISIS and pledged their support. While we wanted to publish their names, they, however, requested their names to be withheld due to personal and security reasons.** A summary of the initiative is provided below from (1) through (5):

1- Strengthen and expand the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), under the existing UN resolutions adopted in 2011, to actively convene a conference of all Libyan armed militias and all key political groups. In such conference the UN would start and directly administer a credible and serious process of national reconciliation, disarmament, and amnesty programs between all parties in order to go beyond all grievances of the past including those before February 17, 2011. The UN should act, as the neutral party Libya needs now the most and take the lead in managing and guaranteeing the enforcement of any outcome by all means referenced in the current active resolutions with the support of the International Community.

2- UN should guide a new political road map and democratic mechanisms for the establishment of a legislative body as soon as possible that can replace the current General National Congress (GNC) and provide direct support and effective guidelines for the nominations, elections and congressional conduct for the new GNC.

3- The UN should provide more direct and active support for the new constitution's drafting and ratification process, already in place by the recently elected committee in charge of drafting the constitution, as well as greater support for the adoption of the new constitution in a national referendum to be managed by the UN.

4- Work closely with the national army of Libya, under the authority of a newly elected legislative body and its nominated government to stabilize the country and create viable and secure Libyan territories for all its civilian population whom may potentially be caught within the warring factions in different regions of the country.

5- Support the inclusion of all Libyans regardless of beliefs or political opinion in the process of a peaceful political transition including all political exiles and war refugees of over 1.5 million Libyans scattered between Egypt and Tunisia.

Honorable Congresswomen and Honorable Congressmen, I believe in order for our foreign policy to succeed with Libya and the region, we must pursue one that is truly based on enlightened self-interest. I would like to make the following recommendations:

Page Three

June 25th, 2014

Statement

A Omar Turbi

Expert – U.S Libya Relation

House Committee on International Relation

Libya at a Crossroads: A Faltering Transition

(a). Islamists in the region have become a reality of the political landscape. Therefore, we must not view and lump extremist Islamists with none extremists ones. The dynamics of political Islam in Libya are different than those in Egypt. The failure of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt may not reflect the realities of the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya. I am a strong advocate of carrying out a constructive and direct dialogue with the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood of Libya. I have had discussions with their leadership. I believe they have genuine interest in a more successful democracy in Libya because of lessons learned from the Egyptian experience.

(b). Support for democratic processes in Libya and assistance in the construction of Libyan institutions has to go beyond encouraging the work of American NGO's. Libya's diplomatic and economic missions around the world are dysfunctional and require overhaul and rebuilding from the ground up. We must not be restricted by sovereignty matters. The U.S government should offer to help the anticipated emerging new Libyan government to build a more effective Libyan diplomatic corp around the world.

(c). We must work closer with our European allies to stem the growing flow of migrants from the African sub Sahara through Libya. We have not done enough to assist the interim Libyan governments install working systems for control of Libyan borders.

(d). I encourage current programs underway by the U.S in training Libyan military personnel in Libya's quest to build a national army. We should learn from any set backs and continue with greater numbers and speed.

(e). We must learn lessons from the attack on the U.S Consulate in Benghazi in September, 2012. I believe the U.S clandestine operations in and around Benghazi in trying to identify Al-Qaeda elements leading up to that time of the attack on the Consulate may have contributed to the assault on the U.S Consulate and the death of U.S Ambassador Chris Stevens and four U.S servicemen.

Honorable Congresswomen and Honorable Congressmen Libya's unique and beautiful coast line, year long lush green mountains, beautiful desert and its close proximity to Europe and the gates of Africa, its treasures of thousands of years of history, and most of all its wealth with natural resources place Libya as an important player on the world scene. Thank you.