CONFERENCE REPORT

PARTICIPATING SCHOLARS

CSIS would like to thank and acknowledge the experts who spoke at the workshop:

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This conference was organized by the CSIS Middle East Program in cooperation with the CSIS Europe Program, the New Defense Approaches Project, and the Program on Crisis, Conflict and Cooperation.

Planning for Post-Gadhafi Libya

On July 25, CSIS convened approximately 50 experts from the government, diplomatic and expert communities to analyze the way forward in Libya. Among the key conclusions of the speakers are:

- There is no military solution, in part because the rebels cannot take Tripoli. Some negotiation will be necessary, but a change could come any time in the next 2-3 years. The Libyan military has adjusted to its degraded condition, and defections have slowed to a trickle. While time is not on Gadhafi's side, neither is it on the allies' side, as there seem few ways to force urgency.

- Even so, the post-Gadhafi era in Libya has already begun. The United States and its allies should talk about it that way, and all should act that way.

- Too much money for the Transitional National Council (TNC) is as much of a problem as too little. The paucity of cash in eastern Libya has helped nurture a culture of voluntarism and broad public engagement. Too much cash at the center will likely lead to centralization and patronage.

- The United States should not become wedded to the TNC, but should be flexible enough to accept a wide variety of outcomes. Not only were some concerned by the TNC's possible fragmentation and its disproportionate support from the East of the country, but some believed that the leadership's residence in Doha ensures that they remain removed from developments on the ground.

- The UN enjoys some broad legitimacy in Libya, but Gadhafi in particular only cares about—and fears—the United States. One speaker suggested the allies will need a new UNSC resolution to handle the task of Libyan reconstruction.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The panel on the Libyan political context attempted to address the current situation on the ground and to draw potential scenarios for transition and conflict resolution. Karim Mezran cautioned participants against speaking about a post-Gadhafi Libya when it remains so unclear when—and

how—Gadhafi will leave power. Tarik Yousef agreed that the nature of Gadhafi's departure is unclear, but that however it plays out, the enduring credibility of the United Nations (which first gave Libya statehood in 1951) should be exploited. Vicki Huddleston expressed optimism for post-Gadhafi Libya, asserting that the TNC had performed well in those areas where it had control.

One panelist suggested that there are two main scenarios for how Libya plays out. The catastrophic one is the implosion of the regime, creating an ongoing civil war in Tripoli and the West of the country. With no recognized authority, the problems of policing and disarmament become an unending struggle. Another possibility is sustained resistance in the West, and the *de facto* partition of the country. While the Libyan military has perhaps a third of the capacity it had at the outset of allied operations, it has adjusted to its new capabilities, and conflict could last two to three years.

In both cases, he argued, there was a need to have someone with standing in the West to assume power and negotiate on behalf of the populations there. Several panelists agreed that Gadhafi still enjoys considerable support in Tripoli, and his military forces still have tremendous destructive force. One cautioned that a counter-revolution would be an enduring threat to any settlement.

Another panelist argued that a political deal could be struck, but it must ensure that Gadhafi will not have a presence in Libya physically, politically or financially. In the context of a negotiation, one panelist suggested, the United States' standing with Gadhafi, which far exceeds that of any other actor or collection of actors, becomes especially salient. A participant commented that U.S. government restrictions on employees' travel to Libya constrain the U.S. role in unhelpful ways, especially as we embark on what is likely to be the long-term containment of western Libya.

Panelists disagreed on the capabilities of the TNC and its rightful role during the transition period. One argued that the TNC does not even have a coherent view as to whether it should engage with Gadhafi, and that it lacks any clear plans for a post-Gadhafi Libya. He said that TNC statements "are all done for U.S. ears." Another shared some of that skepticism, arguing that the TNC was still seeking to establish its legitimacy, and that its ability to effect change

on the ground was slight even in the areas where it is purportedly in control. A participant held that it was vital that the United States left open the possibility of a range of outcomes, including the eventual marginalization of the TNC and its leadership. A third panelist was far more optimistic, arguing that there were few signs of fragmentation within the coalition, and that plans for the political future of the country are well underway.

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SECURITY

The panel on security planning explored the roles that various actors can and should play in post-conflict Libya. John Herbst argued that not enough thought had gone into either defining the problem in Libya or clearly defining the goals of allied action. Jim Dobbins suggested that we need to think of a hierarchy of needs in Libya, and while things like economic stabilization and democratization are desirable, they are not possible without security first and foremost, and governance. Bill Nash held that the post-Gadhafi era in Libya has started, but that that era must not be UN-led, but instead "Libyan-led and UN-assisted."

Panelists generally agreed that contingency planning for post-Gadhafi Libya has been scant. One argued that we had neither thought through success nor failure, especially how one might fill a vacuum if Gadhafi left the scene and no one filled his place. There was special concern as to what would happen in a chaotic post-Gadhafi Libya. One panelist argued that it would take months for any UN force to arrive, and that "The EU never stands up when the chips are down." He argued that a key unanswered question is whether there are Libyans who can "make a deal for stability," ending bloodletting but leading to an authoritarian future for the country.

Another panelist was less dire, suggesting that Libya fell somewhere in the middle of post-conflict situations in terms of difficulty. Its population falls somewhere between

Bosnia on the one hand and Afghanistan and Iraq on the other. It is highly accessible to international forces, it has relative linguistic, religious and ethnic homogeneity, and it has some sense of national identity. Its key deficiency is in political experience.

Even so, it is unclear who might staff a broad UN mission, who could do disarmament, and who could do reintegration. While many argued for a negotiated settlement, the speaker observed that historically outcomes based on one side's victory over another tended to be more durable. He also suggested that while there would be calls for bringing former regime members to account, in successful transitions those processes were delayed for decades.

Panelists expressed concern that sustained international efforts in Libya could drain support for other operations around the world. One concern in the near term is NATO support in Afghanistan, but a participant also noted that the United States had never been able to match the global demand for police training. One participant suggested that there is not even a model of successful security sector reform. A participant observed that it is a mistake to see police assistance as anything other than political, although that is precisely how it is often seen.

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GOVERNANCE

The governance panel considered how international organizations might play a role establishing a constructive political framework for Libya. Alex Martin cautioned that foreign assistance was in danger of becoming "supply driven," shaped by the capabilities and interests of the donors rather than the needs on the ground. Libyans may have a much stronger preference for ordinary police training rather than high-end counterterror assistance. Daniel Serwer appealed for a broader strategic plan that could guide the actions both of outside actors and those inside Libya itself, and appealed for a new UN Security Council mandate to guide such ac-

tions. Robert Lamb emphasized the need for international actors to be modest in their promises to Libyans, given a constrained ability of outside actors to deliver on those promises.

Panelists agreed that it was easy for outsiders to try too hard to shape post-Gadhafi Libya. One maintained the importance of an inclusive process on the ground that would give a broad sense of ownership to diverse sets of Libyans. He suggested that planning is more like "growing a state organically" and that it is important to take into account the disposition of existing Libyan state structures and institutions on the ground. One panelist observed that nearly every post-conflict situation he had worked would have benefitted from less money. Several shared the fear that putting too much money in the hands of a central authority would aid in the centralization of that authority at the expense of local initiatives, and empower an elite with few incentives to serve the public. One panelist, however, argued that a strong, unified but federated Libya was an important international interest, and the international community should not hesitate to promote it.

One panelist strongly suggested the need to inventory existing Libyan institutions on which a future Libyan government can draw. The TNC is one of many such institutions; according to one panelist, "The larger it gets the closer it becomes to being a legislative rather than executive body." As a legislative body, however, it fails to represent a large number of relevant parties, and it does not yet enjoy domestic legitimacy. One panelist held that the activities and engagement of local councils already extant in Libya are more encouraging indicators than the activities of the TNC thus far. Panelists generally agreed it would be preferable for the TNC not to control all of the funding in Libya to encourage the formation of "bottom-up" institutions. The "absorptive capacity" of Libyan society is an ongoing concern, highlighting the importance of working with existing institutions and accepting partial results over a longer time period.

Speakers generally agreed that it would be desirable to have a new UN Security Council resolution to govern international activities in post-Gadhafi Libya, but one panelist argued that the UN is not strong enough by itself, and that the EU needs to "step up." It has vast economic interests in

Libya, and the human cost of turmoil—through migration or extremism—is most likely to affect Europe directly. In any international effort to help Libya, coordinating support will be vital.

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One panelist urged a distinction between democratic governance and legitimate governance, arguing that legitimacy derives from more than just the ballot box. Governance is more than mere public administration, he argued; it is decision making, delivery of public goods, and managing networks of influence or patronage networks.

A panelist suggested that, in their political transition, Libyans will need to take the lead in promoting inclusivity across a range of factors including age, gender, political orientation, and regional representation. Once an inclusive authority has been established, Libyans should agree on a schedule for political settlement, and then draw up a constitution after a broad public consultation. A panelist suggested that in an ideal world, this process will be deliberate rather than speedy. Another agreed, suggesting that rushing into elections tends to increase polarization, aid factionalism, and raise incentives for conflict and confrontation.

One panelist observed that it was important to see Libya in terms of a series of transitions rather than a single one. Another added that it would be a mistake to think that the international community's work would be over once Gadhafi is gone; it is only then that the real work begins.

ALLIED COORDINATION

The panel on allied coordination agreed on the broad goals for post-conflict Libya. It emphasized that the situation in Libya was important to EU member states, not only because of the possible impact on direct European interests, but also its impact on regional reform processes and on illicit weapons traffic. One suggested that Europe was in the process of shifting its view of Libya from a "crisis management" framework to a "post-conflict" framework. They agreed that large-scale financial assistance was likely not necessary because of Libya's oil wealth and existing infrastructure, although one thought that a lack of liquidity might make some assistance necessary in the near term. One European speaker thought two priority areas for assistance were vocational training and security sector reform.

Panelists all argued for a limited EU role in post-Gadhafi Libya, and one suggested that in many cases, government-to-government coordination could be just as effective as EU-based coordination. European speakers agreed that the UN should be at the forefront of any international assistance effort in Libya, and they echoed the call for a new UN Security Council Resolution on Libya that clearly defines and delineates the roles that various Western powers should play.■

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