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A CITY-BASED STRATEGY FOR REBUILDING LIBYA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL ALLEN: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I am John Allen; I am the president of the Brookings institution and to those who are tuning in via webcast, thank you for joining us from near and far. We are glad to have you with us and we are honored by your presence and it is a pleasure this morning to have everyone here and to hear our remarks and our panel discussion on Libya.

We are joined this morning by a number of former diplomats, esteemed guests and journalists and you are most welcomed. You enhance this session. We are also joined this morning, we are very honored by the presence of the Libyan ambassador to the United States, Her Excellency Wafa Bughaighis, the ambassador who kindly agreed to join us this morning and to offer her comments as well.

Ambassador, thank you for your encouragement of the study and thank you for all that you are doing for the Libyan people in the United States. So to begin, ladies and gentlemen, in no uncertain terms Libya ranks among the most complex challenges of the Middle East and North Africa. Libya, though free from the authoritarian rule of Muammar Gaddafi continues to exist as a country divided with violence ever looming.

The challenging political environment in Libya is only compounded by ongoing concerns related to mass migration, human trafficking, as well as the efforts of terrorist groups like Daesh, the Islamic State and Ansar Al Sharia who see Libya as a safe haven and an operation platform for their many nefarious activities.

As well, recent reporting from Reuters has indicated that Khalifa Haftar and his Libyan national Army are actually eyeing Tripoli, the capital of Libya and the home of the UN recognized government of national accord. These matters only further complicate the situation in this country. This morning, we have gathered together to discuss a consortium effort on the future of Libya and our report entitled: Empowered Decentralization: A City Based Strategy for Rebuilding Libya.

As our upcoming panel will discuss in detail, this paper articulates a city

based approach for the stabilization and the development of Libya's politics, economy and security and is intended to be tailor made for both the unique cultural dynamics of Libya and its people as well as the potential special role of the United States and what it can do and what it can play, along with key allies in making these recommendations a reality.

Furthermore, this report reflects an important task force approach and a uniquely interdisciplinary, inter think tank and international effort. We have scholars joining us from a number of think tanks here in Washington and around the world to include the Carnegie endowment, the Atlantic council and CSIS as well as Brookings Doha Center and our partner institution in Milano ISBY.

I could not be prouder of the group that came together under such short notice to begin to work on this effort. Ladies and gentlemen, this taskforce was very careful and acted thoughtfully in assessing how best to support the Libyan people and it's important that we note that we took into account the trauma and the great violence that the Libyan people endure and that has been done and continues to be done to them to this day.

They've been forced to endure tremendous hardship and the world must not stand idly by while the political situation in Libya stands at the knife's edge. That perspective and that urgency was at the very forefront of our minds while developing this report and this report could not have been done. In fact, it would have been meaningless without that context.

I would like to speak now directly to the Libyan people to whom we are broadcasting via webcast today.

First, let me thank you for your thoughts on this work that we've done. I have seen at least one paper prepared by a young Libyan scholar in Libya. Those insights and others that we have received directly from the Libyan people have been very thoughtful and very helpful to us and will continue to shape our thinking on these matters.

Second, we in this task force know your trials continue to be great and that the road to national reunification and peace will inevitably be long and it will be arduous but

also know that the American people and America's allies have not forgotten you. Your path to freedom was costly and it remains perilous and there is promise on the horizon but we also know that we have to hear from you and that we want you to know that we stand with you. Libya Nanu Marak.

This report and this morning's public event are for us only one small step towards a better future for your important country and your noble people. It was a deeply personal effort for our team and we are hopeful that this will spur continued meaningful dialogue and progress in the weeks and months and years to come, not just here in Washington but in the capitals of our allies and the capitals around the world as well as with meaningful organizations that can facilitate a credible permanent and peaceful outcome for all the Libyan people.

As far as we are concerned, this work has only just begun and we look forward to bringing to bear our collective expertise wherever it may be of benefit to the long term health of the state of Libya and to the people of Libya. So with that, let's move forward with today's event and let me turn the remarks over to ambassador Bughaighis for her own set of remarks and once she has concluded, we will then move to the on the record panel featuring six of the 17 scholars who helped to bring this report to reality.

For now, on behalf of Brookings, on behalf of the institutions involved, Madame Ambassador, we welcome you to the stage and we thank you for your support.

(Applause)

MS. BUGHAUGHIS: Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, thank you General Allen for your very kind introduction and for your leadership on this event. Thank you to each of the scholars and luminaires who work this very thoughtful strategy published last month.

While there have been many efforts to support Libya's transition to democracy since the end of 2011, they have had a similar orthodoxy and often were based upon reconstruction efforts in other countries.

We know a cookie cutter approach won't work in the Middle East and North Africa because each country is different. Yes, Libya faces challenges that are similar to other countries but it has unique demographies (sic) and resources that makes its situation different from all other countries that sought to transition to democracy.

I commend the authors of this strategy for formulating their recommendations based upon deeper studied observations and analysis of the current dynamics in Libya. I also commend them for suggesting a new approach not previously attempted and new ideas are very much needed in Libya and I look forward to all of you pursuing this kind of (inaudible).

I will refrain from commenting further on the specific recommendations because they are new but I know they will be studied very closely in Libya. I will conclude and I will make my remarks very brief because I want the panel to start. I will conclude by commenting on one observation that is made throughout the report. Yes, it's true, the United States is viewed as one of the most neutral actors in Libya and is pursuing an agenda intended to benefit all Libyans. For this reason, I know that Libyans welcome the recommendations by the authors that the United States enhances its engagement in Libya.

Our national security is very much tied to the national security interest of the United States. Thank you again for recognizing this and for promoting new ideas on how to pursue our common national security interest. Thank you so much and I look forward to hearing the analysis and I look forward to hear responses from everybody. Thank you so much; I appreciate it.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Madame Ambassador, President Allen, thank you. Thank you everyone for being here. I am Michael O'Hanlon with the foreign policy program. I had the real privilege of helping coordinate this project which was for me an education with some of the best people in the world who know Libya, have lived Libya and one of our panelists is Libyan and have a lot to offer, I think, in terms of this debate.

How we'd like to proceed now is to essentially go through the panel and I will introduce them briefly in just a moment with two rounds of discussion before we go to you for your thoughts and questions a little bit later on.

First I want to ask the panelists to help us understand Libya today. It's an issue that has not only intermittently received American attention. We know it has now been 8 years since President Obama asked the UN security council for authorization to protect civilians. In Libya later that year, Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and killed, the following year, of course, the US Ambassador was killed of the United States. Since that time has tended not spend a lot of focus or energy on the broader UN enterprise but we know that perhaps there could be an opportunity for reengagement at this point and that is part of why President Allen asked us to convene this study group and we want to help you catch up. Some of you know the situation on the ground very well.

Others are more like me, coming at this with maybe a generalist or regionalist eye but not a lot of knowledge about Libya itself and we want to make sure we establish a good foundation for discussion so that will be our first round and Fred Wehrey in particular who I am going to introduce in just a second along with the rest is just back from Libya. Others are certainly in contact with Libyans or with their networks frequently so we will learn a lot from that quick round of introduction and broad remarks on the state of play. Then I am going to ask each person to essentially talk about one of the big ideas in the report and there are about five big ideas, I think, so it should work pretty well but they may talk about each other's remarks too and we will have a little bit of back and forth discussion before we go to you.

Let me just say one more broad word of framing then I am going to say a word about each panelist and then we will start. By way of framing, I think we all know as Americans, those of us who have been watching this debate from Washington living in this country as US citizens that Libya is an issue that we've sometimes preferred not to prioritize that the broader Middle East has been a place where we've had to worry about Iraq and

Syria and Afghanistan and Iran, not to mention Saudi Arabia, not to mention the civil war in Yemen and sometimes Libya just seems like a bridge too far, an issue too far and it's often been appealing to sort of turn our eyes away from this country that's been afflicted by so much violence but I would simply suggest that we may reconsider, and let me give just two reasons, one of them about danger and threat but one of them about opportunity.

The danger and threat part, I once heard a very smart person say that what happens in Libya stays I Libya, like Vegas rules but the more I learned about Libya, I realized that's just not true. More foreign fighters came from Libya to Iraq and Syria than I believe from any other country, certainly for certain periods of those countries' tragic wars and wound up contributing to Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Many of the migrants into Europe in the last few years came through Libya. Most of them were not Libyan, most of them were coming from other parts of Africa but this was nonetheless an important place for movement of people. So for those two reasons alone, Libya matters. Libya can be a threat, it can be a danger to the broader region and to the international community but Libya also offers opportunity. John Allen explained the degree of difficulty, violence and chaos that's rained in Libya for the last eight years but we also know Libya has some advantages. It's a population of only 6 million people. That means that the scale of the problem, while substantial is not necessarily overwhelming.

It's primarily Sunni Muslims; it's primarily Arabs. That means that some of the sectarian and confessional tensions that we've seen in other countries that make life and politics even more complicated are perhaps not quite as severe in Libya. Libya has oil and in fact, there is some semblance of daily life continuing in Libya, even despite the lack of a strong government now for 8 years. Partly because Libyans are adaptive and entrepreneurial and they found ways to do some of the things locally that we are advocating to be more formalized and made more systematic in this report with the city based concept. They've been doing this already and the international community in some cases has been helping them already.

So I think there is opportunity. The more I learned about Libya doing this report and project the more I thought that actually there is a moment that we could perhaps take advantage of. So without further ado, Alice Friend just to my left is the CSI, that's the Center for Strategic International studies. She worked on Libya at the Pentagon during the Obama administration including knowing a great deal about security sector reform and efforts to build a Libyan security force in that period of time.

Next to her is my good friend Fedi Saini Fasanotti who is a non-resident senior fellow here at Brookings and has just arrived to join us from Italy in the last couple of days for a visit. She is a lifelong expert on Libya and has taught me more about Libyan history than anyone else and just an elegant writer and very thoughtful scholar who cares deeply about a country just across the Mediterranean just across from her own.

Next is Jeff Feltman who is the John Whitehead visiting scholar here at Brookings with a remarkable and distinguished career in US government. He was assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern affairs and the Obama administration under Secretary Clinton. He then went to the UN where he was under Secretary General for political affairs. In both portfolios he was watching this general part of the world and certainly at the UN a lot of his job was about Libya and he's been one of the key intellectual masterminds behind this report and taught me a great deal along the way as well.

Next to him, Fred Wehrey who has written my favorite book about Libya, The Burning Shores and like you, perhaps, I don't always love every single think tank book I read and sometimes it's sort of like eating your spinach where you know it's good for you but you're waiting to get to the end. This book is beautifully written. I mean when I learned that Fred had been in the US government doing various jobs before, I thought maybe he had been a creative writing camp his whole life because it is just a wonderful narrative and a very easy way to start to learn about Libya's recent history and its complex politics and demographics. I recommend it very strongly to everyone here.

And then finally, Karim Mezran from the Atlanta Council who is a guy with a

big heart and big brain who taught me about Libya from a Libyan perspective and has studied his native country here in the United States at the Atlanta Council, in Italy in Rome, at Johns Hopkins University where he did his graduate work and really brings a passion but also an ability to be dispassionate and to think through the options facing his country from a very thoughtful perspective so without further ado, thank you for your patience in letting me work through my introduction and I guess we will come down the line later but we will start in the first instance with Fred, as I said because Fred is just back from Libya and I wanted him to begin to paint a picture of what's going on the ground. I am not going to ask him to do it comprehensively. After he does that, we will go to Karim and then the rest of the panel just to try to put a few of the basics here before us all. Thank you.

MR. WEHREY: Great, thank you, Mike for the kind introduction. Thank you for your leadership of this project, also General Allen who is really a superb team effort to put this together and we do hope it has an impact.

I was in Libya during a period of very violent thunderstorms that sort of crashed over the shores and dumped snow up in the mountains and this could be sort of a cheap cinematic metaphor for what was happening in the country, the sort of sense of unease and dislocation that was sort of palpable among many people.

And this was primarily due to an event that I think we are all aware of and this is General Haftar's Fazan operation. It was described to me by a UN official as essentially reshuffling the deck of cards in Libya. For the first time you have a singular but I think more shaky and more schismatic force. It's controlling two thirds of Libya's territory although most of the population is still out of his control but he controls the oil, the water, and this has really cast a shadow over politics and calculations in Tripoli and the environs of Tripoli, various towns and militias are making new calculations. There are negotiations under way. In many cities and towns up in the mountains and on the western seaboard, you have basically armed groups and political actors that have declared themselves with general Haftar even while nominally they are under the GNA so it's really shaken things up quite a

bit.

I think in terms of our study and this city-based approach, the fact that General Haftar was able to move into the south is really a sort of almost indictment of the failures of a city based approached by the GNA that there was tremendous resentment in the south among towns, in municipalities, that they were not getting the support they needed. There was a vacuum into which General Haftar and his LNA moved.

Now their model, what they are bringing. There are real questions about its sustainability. They are bringing cash, supplies, apparently policemen from the east. How long is that going to last? There are already signs of communal tensions erupting so as a model of state building, I think it's wise to sort of question this but it does, again, reemphasize this need for a locally based approach that we need to address our efforts at the local level.

I think the other piece of this that I heard just from talking to Libyans, activists, Libyans that were involved in a lot of local governance efforts was tremendous appreciation for this report. It validated a lot of what they were doing; it was a sign of encouragement, the fact that it came from the US showed that the US was behind this and so in that sense it was quite well received but again, it's -- you can't focus entirely at the local level. There is a real sense that things are stuck at the top, that politics is frozen. There is a number of legislative, administrative fixes that need to happen at the top in terms of budget allocation and so we can get into the technicalities of that as well.

The general mood on the street in Tripoli again was one of I think unease and anticipation. Unfortunately, I think the militias are still out in force very much so. There are still long lines at (inaudible); I witnessed them. The militias are still controlling those banks. Various militias are, again, sort of testing the wind, seeing which way things are going with General Haftar's advance. The very powerful town of Misrata, we can talk about its calculation, its moves toward Haftar. There are some interesting debates happening in that town. Also, the role of Zintan on Tripoli's western flank is very important as well so I

think all of these actors are making new calculations.

And I was also there during the Abu Dhabi meeting and I'll leave on this. I think this was an important meeting. We can talk about its ramifications. I think there is this general sense of unease among Libyans that their fate is being decided in foreign capitals. Why was this meeting being brokered by the Emiratis. Of course these meetings matter but again I think it just underscores that for the perception of local people, there needs to be this grassroots effort, there needs to be this bottom effort. To be sure, there needs to be reconciliation among the political elites but again, the local is so important.

I'll just conclude with an emphasis that there are a number of entities doing this sort of local level engagement, UNDPEU, USAID and I think this report lends a real moral boost to what they are doing and it adds, I think, the credibility of the United States behind that locally based effort so --

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Fred. Before we go to Karim, I wanted to ask you to add just a little bit more because I think a lot of people in the room, probably most of whom have not been to Libya or at least not in a long time maybe can't really quite still form an image of what looks like on the street because we know this has been a place that hasn't really had a functioning government for eight years. You mentioned the GNA, the Government of National Accord but as you said, it's not particularly cohesive, not controlling that much of the country and so when you're driving around Libya and Tripoli in particular, what does it feel like? Does it feel chaotic? Do you feel like you're constantly going through checkpoints? That there are multiple militias controlling different parts of town? Do you hear gunshots? I mean just -- even paint a little bit of more color of what it feels like to be in Libya for those of us who have a hard time picturing it, if you could.

MR. WEHREY: Well there is a sense of normalcy. And look, I'll just underscore this. The tremendous resilience of the Libyan people -- and I don't want to paint -- all we hear about in the news is the migrant story or this collapsing state but I went to an art gallery that was thriving. There is life in this city. People are out on the street, the old city

is open, people are doing business but the sense is this is all dependent on sort of this negotiated settlement between the various militias that control the neighborhoods so you pass through checkpoints, there are police, but those police are really just checkpoint police. I mean the real muscle are still the militias so you are going through this very ritzy neighborhood of high-end places where there are all these shopping stores. It's controlled by a Zintani militia basically. You'll see the police but everyone knows that it's a factional, regionally based militia that's basically got this piece of real estate.

Other towns are -- there is normalcy, I mean -- for instance Sabratha but again, how is security being managed in that town? It's an arrangement between militias, military council, a municipal council and so is it the sort of state that we would like? It is a form of governance and authority that appears very normal but as we've seen from the outbreaks of fighting, it can quickly collapse and that's what people are afraid of. You have to be very careful in knowing where you are in the city and of course, these things can flare up if some militia decides that he wants to go after somebody that did something wrong to him so it's I think tenuous.

MR. O'HANLON: That helps a lot. Karim, over to you with the same broad question of just help us understand Libya today in whichever dimension you want to emphasize, politics, security, economics. Over to you, my friend.

MR. MEZRAN: Thank you. Thank you very much John. Thank you for your introduction. Thank you for hosting this hard work and thanks to Mike for your leadership.

There is one point that I would like to stress about the report which is the premise from which we started from. It is very important that we understand that all of our efforts are geared toward helping or supporting the Libyan people in their march towards what was the target of the revolution to begin with. That is to acquire dignity for its population, freedom, human rights and a pluralist political system. That's something that we tend to forget, especially in the last few months when the talk is about the Bonapartist solution, the general who comes and takes control, better the strong man than anything else.

All those cheap shots that we are seeing happening around is something that we did not take into consideration much. We want to project a future for Libya which is one of the difficult paths but tending towards -- I am not going to say democracy but towards a pluralist constitutionally based political system because I think that the Libyans deserve that and we cannot also forget the sacrifice that has been done by thousands of people to reach that point.

This is one of the premises which I think is very important that we make because upon this are based many other recommendations that we do.

Now to the local level, the new approach is important because it goes to give a value to the local roots of the Libyan population which after the fragmentation, the collapse of the state resorted to the local entity and worked it out. In most cities, in most places, the local authorities have handled the situation (inaudible) protection have worked so it would be important for the traditional community to understand these dynamics and go down to strengthen these forces, to train, to prepare, to finance, to support in any way.

But I would like also to stress another point which is all of this, it works as Fred brilliantly said, only if we insert all the actions that we do at the local level into the national framework. We don't want a state of city states, of village states actually, more of the case. Each one against the other or in a sort of a non-belligerent situation. We want a national country. We want a state that is decentralized and that's the strength of our report is that there will never be a state where in order to build a building in Tobruk, you have to go to Tripoli to ask permission or the plan.

Essentially this is decentralized but within the national context because otherwise we will not have a state. The modernity project will not go ahead and the authorities are there to ensure the rights, the freedoms that the Libyans fought for will not be able to provide it (sic).

This is, I think, the most important point that the Libyans are trying to get, especially from a report like this. What can the United States and other allies can do for

them. And this can be done only if the direction is very clear. There is no neocolonialism, there is no attempt of imposing a foreign order into the (inaudible). It is something that in my opinion I can always go back to that moment of independence where thanks to the help of the United Nations and Adrian Pelt and the support of the United States behind that, Libya was given independence and became a state. The strategy was to guide the Libyans to do their job. Libyans gained their independence; Libyans demonstrated for independence but the guidance was there, was coming from foreign supporters, from foreign help that allowed the process to finish and complete independence.

There is no difference except for the changing of times in the principles today where the United Nations should lead the Libyans to do their job, to do their, to put their acts together and find a solution and that is why we don't talk about wider American interests in Libya, not because we expect the Americans to come and do something but because we really need the superpower, the country that is -- it is perceived as the least interested in the exploitation of the resources of Libya to come and help the United Nations to guide the country through this very difficult moment. Whether we end up in an agreement between the two different polls, the one of the GNA and the other one led by Haftar and the HR or it will be a different way, still, we have to understand that that guidance is essential.

If that is understood, then all the other recommendations will fit into place and will be understood as a more organic and dynamic way to bring a solution -- a political peaceful solution to the struggle that is going on now. If we don't understand that and don't accept that, it will not work, thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Karim very much. Before we get into the detailed discussion of the recommendations, I wanted to ask Jeff and then Fedi and then Alice to also give whatever additional snapshot they may wish of conditions today and Jeff, I know that you're in touch with some of your UN former colleagues and tracking some of what's happening on the ground and in the region if you could perhaps pick up a little bit and give us just a sense of recent activity on that front. The special representative Solami has

now been in Libya more than a year and a half I believe with his American Deputy, Stephanie Williams who is helpful to us with this project with some background information. You know these people very well and are in touch, I wonder if you could add a word, please.

MR. FELTMAN: Thank you very much and thanks Mike for the leadership of this project and of course it's an honor to be here in front of everyone and especially in the presence of the ambassador so thank you very much for being here, ambassador.

I think we all recognize, as Fred mentioned, that we need some kind of -- that Libya needs some kind of agreement among the Libyan elite, among the top leaders, the competing leaders, and you need something from the ground up that would support that but you can't have one without the other. And Rosan Solami, the UN Special Envoy, the UN Special Representative for Libya, the head of the UN mission Libya Unsmill has been working on both of those fronts and I believe that he views the February 27th meeting in Abu Dhabi between the Prime Minister, the head of the recognized government in Tripoli, Fayez al-Sarraj and General Khalifa Haftar as a promising start of at least getting that top down part of the agreement in place and I understand that there has been meetings between people associated with General Haftar and Prime Minister Sarraj about some of the longstanding political proposals such as reform of the Presidency council, unification of the institutions, perhaps a new government, things like that and moving towards elections.

As the report itself says -- as our report itself says elections themselves do not create a democracy but elections are a way to manage expectations. Poll after poll shows that the Libyan people expect to be able to express their own view and choose their own leaders through elections so there seems to be an understanding, at least at the top, that the goal does have to be elections even if the time for that isn't yet stated because there has to be a number of things that fall into place first.

There still is talk, as we mentioned in this about the idea of a national conference to try to build more of a consensus among a broader number of people than simply the two gentlemen I mentioned about the way forward.

MR. O'HANLON: That's fantastic. Thank you. Fedi, you've been thinking about Libya for a long time and putting it in historical perspective and I just wondered, and again, not to ask you to do impossible and paint the entire picture of the country today -- just what strikes you most about the moment we are in now when you put it in the context of Libya's history over the decades.

MS. FASANOTTI: Okay, first of all, thank you for being here and thank you to the ambassador and thank you to the Italian embassy to be here also. I know that our work, which has been very hard has been very well welcomed in Libya and in Italy so that's a good start first of all.

To answer your question, I see many things similar to the past in Libya and this is one of the points of the major discussion between me and Karim Mezran because he thinks in a different way in many respects but I see some of the ethnic, some of the tribal differences still in the country and not just because still the concept of tribe is strong in Libya but just because the core of the people is pretty much the same.

The majority of people are still in the big cities and then there is the dessert which has never changed and has shaped the people. So I think that when we started to approach this study, what I tried to do was to give my knowledge of Libya in historical terms and the idea of a city based model is just deep in history so Libya has always been a kind of hybrid in this regard so we really started the approach thinking with enormous respect and knowledge of the Libyan history.

MR. O'HANLON: Just one follow up before I turn to Alice and then we'll go to the second round with discussion of the main recommendations. One of the things that we went through in the paper and thinking about the basic concept that you helped us understand and Karim and others also was that we did not want to think of a future Libyan government as a federal model based on the three traditional regions that we thought there was actually more to lose than to gain from that sort of framework. Could you explain why? Again, I am sure some people in the room know but others may not.

MS. FASANOTTI: The question is right because Mike knows better than anyone that my first idea for Libya was about Federalism and still it is so my -- I know that I think in a different way here at this table but I think that federalism is the solution for a democratic Libya in the future which means another three classical regions: Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Fazzan because it would be impossible, of course.

Libya had its own federalism from 1951 with the king and it was divided in let's say, three regions. What I see for Libya it's a Federal state more similar to -- just to let you know as I wrote in one of my articles, Germany or Switzerland but with a strong (inaudible) center able to govern the state. Anyway, in our discussions, in the last few months, the idea of federalism was left away because of course, the nation is still in a kind of process so the idea of federalism is not possible in this very moment and the city based model was the best in order to create a nation which has still to be active.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Alice, could you just paint a picture for us a little bit of the state of security forces in Libya today? And whatever else you want to observe about current conditions and again, you are involved in the earlier effort around 2013 to try to create a general purpose for switch (sic) which was a difficult approach and in terms of trying to create a national army didn't completely succeed but there have been elements of police and coast guard and there has been perhaps some progress there and something to build upon but just how do you see the whole complex mix of militias, police, coast guard, any fledgling army that may still be around and how this has evolved over recent years?

MS. FRIEND: Sure, thanks, Mike and I'll go quickly because I am sure the audience is eager to get at us as well. So primarily I think we started out with an observation that the primary security institution in Libya today is really the militia which is not to say that there aren't other government organized security institutions as well but the real power over the use of armed force in Libya is this vast collection of militias that are extremely variable in their size and shape and power and territory and ideological commitments and economic leverage, etc. etc. so there is really no national form of security provision on the ground in

Libya today and so we started from a recognition of that and from a recognition of the fact that control over security provision is a major source of power and a major source of political power and so I think one observer asked the question whether there was a government with militias or militias with governments and so we began from that sort of perspective as well as the observation that certainly General Haftar and his Libya National Army has consolidated the most but that is not to say that it is fully consolidated and so there is a lot of dynamism on the ground in terms of security and that this therefore generates a major aspect of that decentralization that we see in terms of politics and power and the kind of self-reliance that obtains on the ground and Libya today.

And that one element of that, though I think a small one from Libyans' perspective but a large and important one from an American perspective is the presence of the Islamic State which the United States has partnered with Libyans on the ground to combat. Much of the elements of IS have been forced to the south but they are still a presence on the ground and will therefore be a major animating element of US policy going forward and I think I'll stop there and let us continue the conversation.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, so now I would like to begin with Jeff and talk about the major recommendations of the report and just -- I am going to very quickly tick them off but let the panelists describe them and explain the rationale.

We think that the United States should return a permanent diplomatic and AID presence to Libya. This could be a very important element of supporting everything else we believe in. As you can see from the title, we believe that we should encourage the United Nations system and Libyans themselves to formalize the way in which cities are often at the heart of development activity and governance and try to create mechanisms that are little bit more transparent a little more systematic. Some of this is happening already but it's somewhat haphazard and entrepreneurial and not always evident what the rules are, how the central government tries to work with the various cities and neighborhoods. We'd like to see that process become a little bit more sort of constant and steady and dependable so that

people know the rules of the game and so that there is a sense of fairness and a sense of, again, transparency and confidence around it. We believe the United States needs to help work with other outside players, including the key players from Europe, Italy and France, key players from the broader region, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and even Russia to try to de-conflict the role of outside powers because there is an element of proxy war and proxy competition that's been going on that we think has to be contained if there is going to be hope for everything else. We also talk about how militias can be encouraged and incentivized to respect certain kinds of rules of the road and some of them are doing some of this already, others not so much and we think there is an important emphasis that needs to be added to make this kind of thing happen more wide-spreadly (sic) because it's not realistic to start from the ground and just build a Libyan army from scratch, we don't think. That Libyan army is going to have to emerge, to some extent by stitching together through regional commands some of the militia efforts and maybe some of the pieces like coast guard as well and so we will talk about and then finally some of us, but not all believe that if Libyans themselves come to this conclusion and request this from the United Nations system that the United Nations should consider sanctioning a modest sized piece implementation of us of some kind or another not for nationwide security but for some of the key government institutions, oil production, other infrastructure. This could perhaps create help a little bit more confidence as well in terms of the degree to which the militias are respecting rules because the UN presence could also -- the UN security presence could also provide monitoring and provide reports. I should emphasize that only about half the people on this panel and less than half the people in the task force actually advocated this idea.

Some thought it might be fine but that it was pie in the sky, that Libyans wouldn't want it, wouldn't request it or the international community wouldn't be able to provide it. Others thought that it might not even actually achieve good results on the ground if deployed so we'll have some discussion of that later on. That's the sort of swing variable in the report that not everyone endorsed. But without further ado, let me ask the individual

panelist to pick up these or other key recommendations, explain them in a little more detail and take a few minutes each to sort of hone in on one idea apiece. Jeff, starting with you if I could please.

MR. FELTMAN: Thanks, Mike. Of course, this report is about a US approach. The report is giving options for US policymakers to consider policy ideas for them to debate. The major questions have to be answered by the Libyans about what sort of state they're ultimately going to have. So these are recommendations about the US and the one that I find particularly important is one that Mike mentioned earlier which is a return of a permanent US presence inside the country.

Now this is not to minimize the diplomacy that the US has done since 2012. There has been a lot of work outside Libya that's been done. Libyan leaders have been received in Washington which gives them a certain profile. There has been discussions between American officials and European officials, Arab officials about Libya -- of course, there's been CT work. I also want to highlight AID through its partners has done a lot of very dynamite work on the ground consistent with the city-based approach that we are outlining so this is not to minimize what the US has done since 2012 when we advocate its time to have a permanent presence inside Libya again.

Now I look at this with three points. I come from three points when I advocate with my colleagues returning the US embassy mission to Libya. First, in the 6 years that I worked for the UN, I saw that one of the essential elements for those UN envoys, UN special representatives who were successful was a strong daily partnership with the US. It's very difficult to have that strong daily partnership with Rosan Solami and his team when one isn't located in Libya as he is.

The sort of comfort level of daily interaction on all sorts of details isn't there and the UN does have the lead, given by the security council with votes by the United States for doing the outside facilitation to help the Libyans answer some of the questions before them so first point, UN envoy representatives are successful when they have -- or an

essential element of their success is a close partnership which is only possible if they are physically located in proximity.

Second, is a point that the ambassador made in her comments. US credibility in Libya. I guess a virtue, perhaps, of not being on the ground since 2012 is that the US hasn't been seen as "interfering" or "after oil" or whatever some of the rumors were initially in 2011. The US does have credibility. It's time to use that credibility on the ground in Libya.

Third point, the US has a track record of success. We say last summer when there was a crisis in the oil crescent that US diplomacy made the essential -- was the essential element in resolving that oil crescent crisis which had revenue issues that would have affected the entire country so there's a track record of success when the US does use its diplomatic muscle.

Now, for diplomatic engagement about Libya, one needs to have the outside diplomacy, how you work with the Europeans, how you help resolve differences between say France and Italy or the Emirates and Turkey, the Emirates and Qatar about Libya. The US is really the only player that can resolve those sorts of differences. You can do that outside; you don't need to have the presence inside to do that but you also need the inside diplomacy and the inside diplomacy inside Libya has both the top down elements and the bottom up elements.

Now arguably, perhaps without a presence, the US could do some of the top down stuff. You can receive Libyan leaders in the mission in Tunis. There can be occasional visits by American officials to Tripoli and elsewhere to see leaders. You can receive leaders in Washington so one can argue that maybe you can do some of the top down diplomacy from outside the country but you certainly can't do the bottom up diplomacy from outside the country.

You are not going to have the range of contacts to really be able to help shape or encourage support for any top down agreements that might be made among the

(inaudible) and you're not going to have that same comfort level in talking to people if you only see them occasionally. I think those of us that have served in diplomatic missions recognize that when you have your first couple of conversations with someone, that person you're seeing wants to make sure you understand his or her narrative so it's going to be more or less the narrative.

Whatever that person's political position is, whatever the person's political history is and whatever that person's proposal is. It's only after you get to know somebody through multiple meetings can you start having the type of give and take that really leads to an understanding on your side of what, in this case, the US might be able to consider supporting and to give you the type of influence and credibility needed so for the purposes of the bottom up diplomacy that's going to be essential to the success of any top down agreement, I think the US needs to be present on the ground in addition to the work that the US has been doing from outside.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. Very cogent and clear and Fred, if I could go to you next, you could, if you like, pick up where Jeff left off or go to another major recommendation but one thing I would ask you to comment on, which I am sure is on the minds of some people who have heard this proposal now is to assess the degree of danger that would be associated with a permanent UN presence -- or US presence, excuse me. Obviously the reason we left was because of the killing of the US ambassador in Libya in 2012 in the sense of a climate and environment of danger that was not consistent with having a diplomatic presence on the ground so how do we assess the risk of a possible return as well as anything else you'd want to discuss please.

MR. FELTMAN: That's always a danger and I am reminded of when I drove by the foreign ministry in Tripoli of these burned out windows and burned out cars where ISIS had just attacked on December 25th so the threat is very real there.

Diplomats and contractors and NGOs are generally quartered in a villa complex by the sea. There is still somewhat of a sort of green zone fortress like mentality so

there is a real force protection concern but as Jeff knows, you have to balance this with getting out and doing your job and I think that's a calculated risk that diplomats -- they weigh that when they do that so you know, there is, as I mentioned a degree of sort of normalcy in Tripoli. Again, I think it's going to have to come down to a calculated tradeoff in terms of the value of our presence and I think we need to be there. I mean the British are there, the Italians, the UN, so we are not there and having meetings in Tunis, it creates a different dynamic. I think sometimes when Libyans go to Tunis to meet it's sort of a different -- meeting them in the country is a completely different set of circumstances, you really need to be present.

Let me turn to my point on a recommendation. This city-based model of security, again, security provision, what do we mean? A degree of security for people that allows them to get on with their lives, the administration of justice, conflict resolution, I think the report recognizes that this is going on at the local level in multiple towns where you have a combination of official forces working with militias under the rubric of a military council working with tribal mediators, wise men delegation, working with business elites and so in some cases you've got this arrangement that works in terms of giving people a degree of security so the question we raise is how do you grow that? How do you formalize it? How do you scale it up? How do you tether it to a national authority because as Karim mentioned, we don't want to create a system of sort of separate city states but again, I think there are a number of positive trends under way at the local level where towns often find a way to get along.

There are negotiated settlements between various tribal delegations. I think in terms of the broader security architecture, it's very interesting to me that at the sort of national level the Army unification project that was shepherded by Egypt is stuck, again, because of that political division between those elites, Sarraj and Haftar.

But at the local policing level, as I understand it, there is quite a lot of interchange between Benghazi and between Tripoli, there are actually delegations, there are

exchanges and that shows me that at the local level, again, getting down to the sort of nuts and bolts of governance, Libyans are getting things done. And so how do we support that effort through this city-based governance approach. Again, we are talking about growing locally constituted forces for policing rather than trying to insert a new sort of centralized military force on top of it. You want to sort of grow it up, formalize it. Again, you are not encouraging warlordism or militias but you are taking advantage of a trend that is already there at the municipal level and I think that's a valuable aspect of the report. I think we also make very valuable recognition that expecting militias to simply disarm through a weapons buyback program or simply getting them jobs is not going to work.

This is not a technical solution. It requires a political compact. It's going to be a gradual iterative process so I think the section on DDRs is worth reading as well so --

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much. Karim, again, over to you, my friend and please highlight for us an aspect of the recommendations that you would consider most central to what Libya needs today and to your thinking.

MR. MEZRAN: Thank you very much, Mike. I have one thing to say before. The Americans did not evacuate the embassy because of the death of the ambassador in Benghazi, Ambassador Stevens. They left because of the clashes that were happening in 2014 between the Libya don in contrast to the operation of Haftar and this is important for one thing. They did not bow or were afraid of the terrorist attack against their compound. They were afraid of the security of the whole mission in a moment in which forces from outside the city and inside the city started fighting. This may help us come to the conclusion that Jeff and Fedi thought that it is important for the Americans to be back because if they are there now, they could constitute another restrain for the militias to attack each other or to move against each other as they have done.

This is important to notice and to add to the values and reasons that have been advocated for an American return. It can have a very important stabilizing effect, obviously, in my opinion because it will prevent or help in preventing a major uproar.

The other point that I know Mike wants me to talk about is the cross that I've been carrying for many years about the foreign intervention, foreign support forces. I never thought of an invasion like that of Iraq or a strong presence like in Afghanistan. What the international community could have done was supply a force of support for those forces in Libya that would be acting in favor of the government. It would have been great if this was happening in 2014 if for some illumination, some foreign (inaudible) could have intervened and blocked what was going on in Tripoli and in Benghazi. That didn't happen, okay.

2016 again, when Sarraj went to Tripoli without any support, that was the moment to provide for him a support force that would allow for the protection of the infrastructure of the physical government members, guarantee security with the Libyan forces on the ground for the city and from there continue. That is all a support force could do. And I still today, I don't see it as a provocation to the Libyans or a popular reaction and outcry against it because we know that when somebody comes to help, that help has to be negotiated, it has to be discussed but has to be received. And this international force studied the way we want (inaudible) it is important and it would have been very important in 2016 to prevent the argument which was a legitimate and unbeatable argument for coming from the east where the new parliament, regularly elected, and the new leadership said but how can we accept anything that is happening in Tripoli when this government is at the mercy of the same militias that we are fighting, the same forces that we are against.

This was an unbeatable argument but helped very much the polarized situation where they said we cannot believe anything that comes from the west because of this state of affairs on the ground and therefore we do our own state, we do our own activities. That was what helped in large part this polarization that de facto killed also any attempt by the United Nations to resolve it because in front of such an objection there are (inaudible) have no answer. They cannot defend in effect the idea of a government that is protected by the same militias against which half of the country is fighting. Therefore, only for that reason I was and I always have been in favor of a third party.

Moreover, scholarship helps and Bruce Jones showed us many times in our meetings when he said that only in one case, I think, civil war was resolved without foreign third party intervention. These are statistics -- scholarships, give it the value you want but it is important.

It is very difficult for local entities fighting with each other to create a situation of compromise in such a way that a step forward can be done without some form of third-party intervention, thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Karim. Fedi, if I could go to you next and you can feel free to say whatever you like but one issue I hope you'll address will include the role of various outside players and we are very proud here at Brookings that we are helping France and Italy work together. We've got two young scholars: Celia Belas and Giovanna DeMaio who have been writing together about how they can handle their broader dispute right now which extends well beyond the Libya question but this sort of is a good way to get a handle on some of the complexities of the role of outside powers in Libya today and we know that the United States has been remiss, I think in some ways not to give enough attention to the problem.

Italy and France are somewhat competitive with each other and a number of Middle Eastern states are competitive with each other and now Russia has got an eye on the prize as well, so to speak and I wondered if you could speak to how a new strategy might try to deconflict the role of the various outside players.

MS. FASANOTTI: Yes. In the paper we tried to put together two different approaches. One was exactly -- you, Jeff, talked about that, the inside out approach so giving strength to the United Nation mission and Rosan Solami and the other one was exactly what you're asking for so the outside in approach which means the United States in a role not of (inaudible) but something like this because maybe in Europe we need this and so trying to get a balance between the many interests in the field so one of -- as we know, there are many actors, many foreign players in Libya.

Libya is very interesting for many -- in many respects because of their strategical position, of course, which is important for the Maghreb, for Africa and for the Mediterranean so first of all -- so the position. Secondly, energy: Libya has huge deposits and oil fields and the oil, the Libyan oil is probably the best in the world and the easiest to be treated so Europe has a problem with energy and in this way, France and Italy are extremely interested in the Libyan oil and gas also of course.

Third, there is another problem: migration. So not only Libyan migration but the African migration. So Africa is a continent in explosion, in demographic explosion with a huge problem of climate change so Libya -- an uncontrolled Libya can be really the door for this kind of migration to Europe and Europe at the moment at least is not well prepared to welcome and to manage masses of people of course.

So between, for example -- just because I am Italian, the problem between the Italian government and the French government is huge in this case so what the United States could do is really trying to be the diplomat in this sense and to help these two countries in coming to agreements because the foreign intervention in Libya in the last eight years has been huge and has made many -- has created many problems so adding further problems to what Libyans already have, of course.

And so I think that -- I remember the first meeting I had with Secretary Mathis was exactly -- his question was for Libya “What can I do for you?” And I said I think that the first thing that you can do is to help us as nations as France and Italy for example to come to some agreement in the country because we are damaging a lot the peace process in Libya with our interests, of course.

So that was -- that is present in the paper and I think it’s a very good reason for the US to be there, active and really operating.

MR. O’HANLON: Super, thank you and I hope everyone is getting their questions ready because now I am going to turn to Alice and then to you. And Alice, I would just like to ask you, of course, to speak to whichever recommendations in the report you

would like to emphasize but certainly including the case of security sector reform and what our vision would be there, our suggestion that Libyans might consider.

MS. FRIEND: Yeah, absolutely. I think Fred covered our perspective on the militias and DDR really well so I'll just add on top of that that in this course of legitimizing militias which have very uneven performance along that metric. The idea is also to professionalize them so you'll see a proposal in here for some kind of a national charter that sets national professional standards for security forces.

There are things like subordination to government control and support for local government as well as national government, respect for human rights as well as commitments to essentially avoid an issue, corruption issues and management of local economic production as well so under those sort of three big rubrics, we would see some kind of national level charter that such groups would sign up to and part of the incentive to signing up would be outside support from the United States and others and hopefully all good things would snowball and over time, as you legitimized these forces and they became more and more professional and more and more competent, you can slowly, as Michael has put it, stitch them together into a truly -- into truly national coverage of security. At the same time, we discuss also ensuring that you develop forces with national missions such as border protection, such as oil infrastructure protection, such as protection of national infrastructure and governing sites and so forth so that you really do get this top down, bottom up approach in the security sector that really works with what is organic to Libya right now and what the Libyans are de facto legitimizing, we would like to come in and see how to de jure legitimize it and make it sustainable.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic, thank you all. So now please have your questions and thoughts ready and what I'll do is I'll try to take two or three at a time and then turn back to the panel and not ask each person to respond to each question but whichever one strikes you as the most relevant. So if we can start here in the front -- or the fourth row, I'm sorry. And there's also a hand in about the eighth row. We'll stay up here for a minute.

Go ahead, sir.

MR. MACK: I am David Mack from the Middle East Institute. I am very pleased to be here. I am very pleased to see an old friend, Ambassador Wafa. But it was in this very room in 2011 or 2012, I don't remember exactly which when a Libyan leader came here, rolled out the roadmap that some -- that he and some of his colleagues had developed. This was what we called the transitional national council. (speaks in foreign language) and he had already done this in Paris with Hillary Clinton, really impressed her and then he did it here in public and impressed a lot of us. And we thought wow, the Libyans really have their act together. All they have to have is a little bit of support internationally and they are going to really make this post-Gaddafi Libya happen.

Now if you read the very good book that Fred Wehrey has written, you get a little understanding of why this went so wrong but so -- you read his book and you'll know why he thinks it went wrong. Why do other people up there think that matters deteriorated so much from that promising beginning and there will be different answers to that and I look forward to hearing your answers.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And we will stay on this side and here the gentleman in the third row please and then the gentleman in the fifth row and then we will come to the panel.

MR. MAAT: My name is Jop Maat so I work for the Libyan Institute for Advanced Studies. The question on the oversight committee, there is clearly an interesting idea on the security side to build certain charters and make sure that the militia are constructive in the maintenance of local security. Was there an idea to take it further in the policy area and to look at the economic side and how to actually build a social contract and are there examples from other countries where that issue was successfully pursued. I mean I heard of Chad where there were some initiatives in the World Bank to pull things together. Are there are ideas? Maybe Mr. Feltman would have ideas on where that has succeeded. Obviously in Libya there is a concern about too much foreign interference. I would very

much like to know that.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you and then we will take one more. Yeah, back there.

MR. PASQUALE: Thank you very much. Errol Pasquale. I am curious about what would be the lesson learned from the last eight years you need to give an advice to the present situation now in Algeria. You are having a big mess on the western border of Libya and I would like to know if there is something that the (inaudible) government could do to not go to the same mistakes that happened in Libya.

MR. O'HANLON: With the caveat of I am not sure how much we are going to solve Algeria today as well but I still appreciate the question. So why don't we begin with Alice and just work down the row to whichever questions people would like to respond to.

MS. FRIEND: I am going to put on my political scientist hat to answer the first question which is that, you know, most international problems have multiple different drivers and so we are all on this panel going to probably have different drivers that we identify. I am going to -- I don't know if it is optimism but I am going to be the one that says I studied the state formation literature a lot that Fred alluded to and state formation actually takes a really really long time so on one level for us and the international community to expect Libya, which was coming from a position of having a strong man that systematically did not empower and enable the kinds of institutions and institutional expertise that you would want to see in order for a state to continue.

To be coming out of that history, for us to expect them to have a nice stable governance structure within eight years and to have worked out all of its politics that had been suppressed for decades is perhaps unrealistic and so I think I'll just lay it there that maybe it's not that everything fell apart and nothing worked. It's just that nothing has worked itself out yet.

MR. O'HANLON: Great, that's very well said. Fedi?

MS. FASANOTTI: I agree with Alice and I would like to add something

about this. For sure, the international community was incredibly ignorant about Libyan history so the mistake was just to believe that maybe in a couple of years we can have Libya from nothing, that's the point. So how many -- if you think of our history -- and so I ask the ambassador not to be depressed about this. I mean it's a long time. If you want to get democracy, which is an incredibly fragile creature, you need a lot of time. If you look at our democratic histories, if you look at the history of the United States or the history of Italy for example or of Europe, France, how many blood (sic), how many decades, centuries were needed to build a nation?

So I think, and I wrote that many many times that when we think about Libya, we must be really patient and -- not to be depressed -- Libya is, as the ambassador was telling, a very particular country with few people, very different, even though the religion is the same, they are incredibly different because the distances are huge and the influences come from different places so I think that they need to find their way and of course they need to be helped but just from the outside.

So if we think, if we want a democratic Libya, it will take a lot of time and effort and a little bit less intervention from the foreign actors, I think.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Jeff, over to you.

MR. FELTMAN: Thanks. David, good to see you and my own take on what happened in 2011 because I was with Hillary Clinton in the meetings with Mahmood Jaleel in Paris and then with Hillary Clinton after the fall of Tripoli, with Susan Rice after the fall of Tripoli and my own trips, both to Benghazi in August of 2011 when the fight for Tripoli was just beginning and as Assistant Secretary of State to Tripoli in the fall after the fall of Gaddafi.

My own sense is that there was complacency on the part of the Libyan leaders to transition the national council. Whether we are talking about Abdul Jaleel or Mahmood Jibril, that they had this sense of victory for obvious reasons, a sense of historic destiny for obvious reasons and they didn't feel they needed the type of outside support that

might have, in hindsight, and hindsight is 20/20 vision obviously, that might have spelled a difference. I remember lots of meetings with Libyan leaders at the time both before the fall of Tripoli and after the fall of Tripoli where as a US official then, I would talk to them about what it is that you need. Where should we be looking to bring in outside help? What should the UN be doing and it was we've got this under control was the basic attitude.

I think that there was complacency and there was a fear, I think, as well. I defer to the ambassador and Karim on what Libyans actually think but I think there was also a fear by some that if they invited the type of international support, that some have now advocated, at that time, that it would have given their opponents the perfect tool to say see, this war was about grabbing our oil. This war was about undermining Libyan sovereignty so I think there was both a complacency and a fear.

In terms of the oversight committee, I think all of us were very well aware of this -- of the possibility, the potential to have Libyans, spoilers, accuse outsiders of wanting to control Libyan assets, wanting to control Libyan oil, Libyan revenue etc.

So when you look at how the World Bank and the Fund operate, they have very strict conditionality that is based on Fund and World Bank practices. This was something we looked at differently which is how can you have something that gives credibility for Libyans who may suspect other Libyans of trying to skew the table in their direction but also has Libyan ownership, but also makes sure that the Libyans are the ones that are in a leadership position so the oversight was sort of a hybrid of what's the conditionality that should be required, how do you bring in international expertise, best practices but how do you make sure it has Libyan ownership?

MR. WEHREY: I agree with everything that was said and I'll just add something on the economic dimension to add to what Jeff said. I mean I think part of Libya's problem is that it suffers from the pathologies of a rentier state. I mean 90 percent or more of the population gets their income from the state. I mean in some sense, this conflict is about distribution of wealth. I mean this sort of mask of ideology or politics as driving the struggle

has sort of fallen away and so you've got a huge culture of predation and plunder by elites and so the question we try to address is how do we reduce the incentives for conflict? How do we fix that distribution problem?

Again, I think there is so much that needs to be done in terms of safeguarding and insulating key assets from militia control, whether it's banks, the foreign ministry, airports, ports, oil fields. And I think this goes back to ambassador Max' question about what went wrong. I think there is a real failure in the early stages of the liberation to secure, you know, key assets from militia or factional control. I think there was a fatal decision by the transitional government to start funneling oil wealth to the militias again, which created this juggernaut that we have today that the fact that I think by one count, there was a European diplomat that said one out of every six males in Libya is getting their income for some sort of security provision, either militia or state and so the entire security apparatus, informal or formal in Libya is basically a wealth distribution mechanism to young men so untangling that is going to be a huge challenge. It requires a political compact but it also requires -- I mean job creation, diversification of the economy and so forth so we are faced with a huge problem and I think the report rightly addresses the economic dimension of it.

MR. MEZRAN: What went wrong happened in 2011 because through democracy and democratization it takes a long time but the foundations have to be laid correctly. The first original sin was that we are not recognizing that it was not an evolution of a whole people against a dictator and a few mercenaries. Gaddafi had this support, had his part of the population that fought for him.

Immediately after the victory, there should have been the recognition by the elites of the moment of the necessity to (inaudible). It was barely talked about and then was ignored but that should have been the first step to do. (Inaudible) what do we want after this revolution, what kind of state, what kind of (inaudible), what kind of identity we foster and all those questions should have been addressed at that moment.

And of course, the second one was the fact that -- I don't think it's

complacency. I am much more harsh on this. I think that it was a precise design by parts of the elites of the moment not to request any help or oversight or support from the west because they wanted to govern the country by themselves.

In that moment, if they played the right card and instead of saying it was only Libyans who did it. It was only us who did it. There was no important -- and instead of underplaying the support coming from the west emphasized it, it would have been a moment for -- on the wave of success, on the way of the victory to help Libya disarm the mediations and start the process of reconstruction with the correct step and not falling into the continuous mistakes -- some of you made reference to paying the militia for appeasement, going to elections right away -- we know that elections do not solve the issue. They crystalize it -- at the point they created the problem from their own -- one mistake after the other, you get to the level where you are now. The solution is extremely hard so to answer, David, your question, I think that besides the problems (inaudible) everything is there but the two fatal mistakes that were done in 2011 are these two and this is, in my opinion, the flaw, the problem, that the foundation of the Libyan state was not laid correctly so whatever we build up now, we are to take into consideration that it's not based on a correct procedure.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Karim. Alice is going to say a word on Algeria but first I am going to add one additional thought which is that while I certainly accept everything that's been said from people who know the history and lived it and understand it much better than I. I want to add in an element of US policy which is not Jeff Feltman's fault but the broader political climate in which the United States was operating in 2011 and 2012 I think needs to be kept in mind as well. We really didn't want to do much and I personally can't claim that I was out there from a Brookings perspective waving a lot of papers to advocate a different approach but I do think given how much we should have learned by this point about the difficulty of state building in situations where you overthrow a dictator and then chaos ensues, even if people on the ground don't think that they are going to need help, the kinds of dangers that arise when you try to build new states should be better known

to us than we could expect them to be well known to Libyans who didn't have all the experience from Iraq to Afghanistan to many other parts of the world so I thought at a minimum we should have -- with the benefit of hindsight, in retrospect, should have been offering some strong suggestions and maybe even some incentives to accept certain kinds of help, best practices on how to build election mechanisms that are not divisive but partly unifying best practices on how to start to build security forces in an environment where a state army has collapsed. I thought we owed the Libyans a little more than we gave them personally and so I'll just add that perspective as well and again, we were overwhelmed and we had a lot going on and I understand why President Obama didn't want to add one more responsibility and he thought NATO should be able to largely do it without us after Gaddafi was overthrown but I still think that broader point about NATO's responsibility towards Libya should be put on the table as well but Alice, any thoughts you want to add on Algeria in particular?

MS. FRIEND: Yeah, just swiftly and I am obviously -- we've departed Libya at this point but I do think that drawing comparisons between Libya today and what may happen in Algeria probably isn't too helpful because Algeria already had its civil war which concluded in the early 1990s. And also, Algeria has a highly institutionalized security and intelligence services so I think that, coupled with the fact that Bouteflika just capitulated to the peaceful protests that the Algerians had been organizing for the last several weeks and said okay, I will not run for another term but I will stay on for an extra year, we'll see what happens but in an ideal world, he could use that year to work out a good transition and certainly his own political faction and the security services have an interest in a stable transition.

The only thing that I can think of for that would be a model for Algerians is that say what you will, politics in Libya are truly playing out between Libyan actors. A high degree of intervention from the outside world but one of the drivers of the Algerian civil war was a sort of stalled effort at sort of electoral politics essentially and I'll leave it at that but I

think drawing comparisons between the two won't get you very far so you should probably look elsewhere for examples for Algeria.

MR. O'HANLON: So let's go to a second round of questions and start with Giovanna and then we've got a gentleman at about the eighth row and then one here in the second row and one in the first row to round it out.

QUESTIONER: I have a question for Federica. And we talked about the US role but I was thinking what about Italy and due to special historical ties with Libya, what would be the added value that Italy could bring to the table? Thank you.

MR. KALER: Thank you. My name is Nathaniel Kaler. I am a researcher at courage services. My question regards this idea of credibility. The report proposes using a US credibility as a tool to advance Libyan security. How would you propose or what would your thoughts be on the actors within Libya that can play a spoiler role that may view the United States unfavorably. I'm thinking here the (inaudible), the Farjan tribes, which may not just view US unfavorably but may view the United States as having taken a cobelligerent role in earlier times in the civil war involving us within conflicts between the Mesratens and (inaudible) so how do we extricate ourselves from that viewpoint and what would be your point and what would be your thoughts on maybe conciliating war engaging with those actors.

MR. O'HANLON: Great, and here on the second row please.

MR. GREGANTI: Thank you very much. My name is Maurizio Greganti, I am the Deputy Chief of Mission at the embassy of Italy here in Washington. I have a comment and a question and the comment is that I feel in a way necessary here to speak a little bit about Italy and France because they were mentioned a number of times and we always hear people saying you know there is this rivalry, there is this big difference between Italy and France. I mean I am a diplomat but believe me in what I am saying, this is largely a myth. I mean people like to speak about it, that, you know, there is this big rivalry compound in the situation in Libya. I mean we had disagreements with France but now we speak

almost daily about Libya and we try to cooperate and basically we have the main interests which is to stabilize the country and this is sincere from our side and from the French as well. I think I can speak for them as well.

Maybe this is not very fancy to say but that's the reality and the basic goal that we have is to stabilize Libya (inaudible) which means as Karim was saying, we want a pluralist political system for Libya in the future. We don't think that a strong man can solve it. If we ever land there, it would be a mistake and we are convinced about this. The question is I think that you are presenting a very thoughtful and accurate and very reasonable strategy but that that holds a lot of innovative ideas, very interesting and how do you see that this fits in the present UN strategy and the strategy that Rasan Solami is pursuing to which we adhere and strongly support because I think this is very important to understand. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much, sir and maybe we should go back to the panel now. We will save yours for a final round because we already have a lot on the table. Those were very very important comments and questions so Karim, should we just start with you and work our way down and come back to the Italy specific questions at the end but start also with the broader issues as well.

MR. MEZRAN: I agree that from a diplomatic point of view France and Italy are theoretically on the same side but it's also true that when you go down to the ground and the last time you notice a stronger French support for the eastern part which we have seen through the accident of the famous helicopter with three special forces troops who died that there has been an involvement in supporting after.

While -- continues to present the face value of -- we report both government (sic). In this, as well, we see the difference and in the more recent policy of the French sponsoring the idea of elections as a way to stabilize Libya, which was not what the Italians were, on the other hand, preaching or talking which was no, you first stabilize the country and then you go to elections. These are the points that we have seen of contrast which from your point of view, the biggest fear might be marginal but for us, we observe -- it carries

weight. It is important. On that (inaudible) we continue to insist on the rivalry, which I agree shouldn't be there and it is on the way to being resolved in these days but for me it definitely has been there.

MR. O'HANLON: Why don't we stay on that point and Fedi, come to you next and ask you to add whatever comments you'd like including to Giovanna's question as well please and then we will resume the other question.

MS. FASANOTTI: I agree with Karim, Maurizio, I am sorry. I've always seen the rivalry, if you want, as you are absolutely right when you say we are not in a conflict because we want the same things. Terrorism is on plate and must be solved. Migration for the two countries must be solved. Energy is another problem. We can't find a deal as we've already done in the past. So saying that, there is a -- in many, let's say a political rivalry so why, for example, as observers we saw that?

Why these endless conferences? Why? So why Conte, Prime Minister Conte, the Italian Prime Minister went out from the meeting with Trump -- now we are going to have a conference in Palermo after the two conferences made by France that took to nothing. So this is our point so this is just a loss of time in our opinion and we would like to see a real agreement not only diplomatic because I am sure that there is but just in politics.

Secondly, what Italy can do. Italy can do a lot with a lot of attention, Giovanna, I think because of our colonial past and history so I remember once I met a Libyan woman and the first thing she said was "Ha, the colonialist" referring to me which is of course, not true at all because I've always done and written and studied for Libya just for the passion that I have for Libya and for the country. Being a historian has taught me to love the country and first of all to respect what Libyans have been through to get their freedom against Italians so I think that this is a matter of fact.

Italy could do a lot but the problem is that often I see just a very basic Italian interest in solving the electoral problems in Italy to find a consensus and not to have a vision. Many things have been done and said by different politicians on -- okay, we will put --

and I am not naming anyone but it's clear -- we will put outposts in Libya between the border with Chad or whatever and these are crazy things to say and to do so I think Italy should really, first of all, read this paper because there could be a huge acknowledgment, let's say, to the culture and to listen maybe to someone else, to some specialist, to someone who really knows the country and to Libyans also. That could really be a good idea.

MR. O'HANLON: So why don't we stay down here, go to Alice and then Jeff and Fred for the other two questions about the tribes and about how our recommendations would affect existing UN or broader policy.

MS. FRIEND: The gentleman who asked the question about the US being seen as a co-belligerent -- I think that's a really important possible dynamic for the US to always keep in mind. Not only in our own efforts to support the Libyans, including in proposals like this and sort of figuring out ways towards legitimacy for the security services at large and ways to build a GPF, this was one of the challenges of the GPF was who is actually showing up for training and what sort of parochial interests do they bring with them and what factions do they represent and who is being sent, etc. etc. Are we just building a new militia for another political actor, these are sort of the questions that loomed large in our minds but then also in our counter-terrorism efforts, right?

To the extent that we are trying to be pragmatic about our own security, we have to be very very careful not to empower or disempower groups on the ground or make it look as though alignment with the United States should have larger implications for US diplomatic positions or for political power. These are just really thorny problems and so I think it's one of those issues that you should keep as a principle in your mind, certainly as a policymaker but also as you go in each instance to try and figure out what the right thing to do is, that's one of the things you should keep in mind and I'll leave it at that.

MR. O'HANLON: Great, thanks, Jeff?

MR. FELTMAN: Thanks. On the credibility question, I don't think any of us were under any illusion that every Libyan is in love with the United States or believes the

United States. I think we all understood there's a range of views about the US and the US role. The US potential role in Libya but what we were trying to emphasize was that compared to other outside actors, we do seem to have unusual credibility with some of the key players now. Now, in any country in the world where US diplomats work, there are going to be people that question the US policy. They are going to question the US role. They are going to analyze not amicably some of the US policy positions so if there is a diplomatic presence on the ground, there are going to be diplomats who are accustomed to dealing with those who have questions about US policy.

I think that it's harder to try to, I don't know, reconcile maybe too much for some of these groups but harder to understand their grievances, their analysis -- it's harder to try to inject some other thinking if you aren't there so it goes back to my point of I would like to see a permanent US presence back in Libya.

On the question about the UN role, I think that what we've tried to do is make policy recommendations for US decision makers to consider that would be supportive of the UN strategy for Libya. After all, the US has endorsed the UN strategy for Libya multiple times through the Security Council and through press statements. I think it's been largely rhetorical support rather than practical support given the lack of presence on the ground but the US has endorsed this so I think we've tried to build a strategy that both supports Roslan Solami and what he's trying to do and is sufficiently independent of that. If he needs to pivot or revise his own strategy or if it simply doesn't work as UN strategies haven't, the US still has options that they can pursue.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And Jeff? Fred?

MR. WEHREY: Sorry. Yes, on the credibility issue. Again, I mean Libyan actors are capable of spinning these narratives against foreigners and you know, sometimes they are grounded in fact, other times they are not and so I don't think we should try to please everybody. I mean there are going to be people that are antagonistic to what we are doing, certain narratives about our alignment with Misrata but again, as Jeff mentioned,

compared to other actors, we do have this reputation of evenhandedness. I think that has to be capitalized upon, I think it has to be managed very carefully again in terms of how we interject ourselves on the ground in terms of perhaps any training initiatives in the past. We have trained certain units that were composed of particular tribes or factions and again, that's very dangerous because then you are in fact seen as aligning yourself with a particular group. As far as spoilers and tribes, again, I don't know if we should consider entire tribes as acting in unison against a certain -- on a position, you know what I mean? Libyan tribes are very diverse, capable of multiple different political positions on certain issues.

The bigger question about violent spoilers, I think, leads me to talk about something that we haven't fully addressed and that's where are the new sources of radicalization that we could see and I think we need to be attuned to the losers of any political settlements, especially the displaced. Massive internal displacement from Benghazi, from the south, this could come back and haunt us in terms of where could these young people go for mobilization, for militancy. Libyan prisons are a huge problem. In the past, they have been incubators of terrorism, of Jihadism and so I am very concerned about a lot of these militia run prisons, east and west and I think we need to be attuned to that.

On the US backing the UN strategy, again, I think it fits it like a glove. I mean the UN is heavily invested at the local level through the UNDP stabilization facility. The US is backing that. Again, I talked to Libyan implementers of that and they welcome this strategy. They see it as complimenting what they are doing. I think the real value added again is where the US fits at sort of the regional and international level in sort of supporting the UN's efforts at getting regional states behind a consensus and that we do have unique clout. We have exercised it in the past among the gulf states, among Egypt, on the oil crescent issue in 2017, our intervention was crucial to that so we have a unique card that I think can move this UN process along and the report identifies that.

MR. O'HANLON: As we go to a final very quick last round, let me also add my own points on this which would be that as a task force writing from a think tank, we have

the luxury of being able to look a little further down the road and construct a longer terms vision and maybe take some of the ideas that are essentially happening on the ground and try to formalize them to try to imagine where they could go next in a way that the UN may or may not feel it is empowered to do as it's trying to develop consensus among Libyans one step at a time so our vision, for example, for security force integration with these ultimately regional commands that then get stitched together into a broader national force. Alice can correct me if I'm wrong but I think that's a little more explicit and a little bit more detailed and visionary than what the UN is able to advocate openly right now for example. And also, as we try to propose that oil revenues go to different local actors, we are trying to make that more formal, propose more ideas like biometric indicators so the same ground doesn't get paid multiple times, try to institute certain basic standards of compliance with human rights practices that would be imposed on groups that wanted to still access those funds. Not that the international community would do the imposition, that Libyans themselves would decide this was the right kind of framework. We were able to suggest that because we don't have to go incrementally one step at a time. We are no, at this point in our lives diplomats. We are thinking more in a theoretical and more longer-term perspective. That's how I would have also answered the question that you put to us.

I know there is at least one more question, maybe two and then we'll come back for a very quick final wrap up round so the gentleman here in the front row please.

QUESTIONER 2: I was wondering if I could ask the panel to expound a little more on the one thing, the one issue that seemed to divide the authors which is whether there should be a peacekeeping force, some sort of modest force protection on the ground? And rather -- leave aside the question of whether it should happen but what would it look like if at some point in the future it does have to happen. My main question is for Ambassador Feltman. You were at the UN. I understand there were some proposals at least discussed at the UN during the time you were there. How far did the UN get and what did the proposal look like when the UN was considering it? What were the mechanisms for

doing it? What would the force have looked like? And then if some of the other panelists on the side that support doing some sort of peacekeeping force, like Karim, like Federica, if you could also expound a little bit on what you wrote in the report about that.

MR. O'HANLON: Great and then was there one more question and then we'll come to the panel. Okay, this will be it, here in the third round.

QUESTIONER 3: I was wondering about a category error. We have had a lot of discussion about the east versus the west in Libya and we all hear about how the internationally appointed Prime Minister is talking to an army commander in the east of Libya. At this point in time, there is a government in the east of Libya, which has an interim prime minister recognized by the House representative. The House representative is internationally recognized but when there are meetings taking place, the focus of the international community is not to talk to the interim Prime Minister. As far as I understand, no one in the UN or anyone in the international community of major ambassadors is talking to anyone in the interim Prime Minister's Libyan recognized government and that's an issue especially with respect to the localization efforts in that (inaudible) east and the south are controlled by the interim Prime Minister and providing all the services. It's becoming very difficult for the UNDP and others to actually interact with respect to the (inaudible) of services under the local programs to communicate in the south which are very much part of the whole UNDP program so it's the category error that political parties should talk to each other, army parties should talk to each other like in the Egypt process and how do we break through where the UN could actually become a real mediator between political parties.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, so let's do a quick wrap up round since we are already at 11:00 starting with Jeff since you got the question directly to you and then we'll go to Karim and work back down, finishing with Alice please.

MR. FELTMAN: All right, thanks. Any UN discussions about peacekeeping in Libya would have taken place before I joined the UN in June of 2012 -- July 1st, 2012 is when I joined the UN so the peacekeeping discussions were prior to that but they came

down, as I understand it, to a question first of all of consent that there was no consent by the host government.

The Russians made it very clear that they would not support a chapter seven resolution which could have overcome the question of consent by the Libyans and I think as Fred indicated, there was no appetite in Washington or else (inaudible) push this issue at a time when the Libyans themselves didn't want it and at a time when the US was distracted by many other things. The Libyan revolution took place as the entire Middle East was up in the air. I mean we can't look at this only in isolation when it comes to this but the questions that I would -- and I defer to Karim whether now the question of consent might be overcome because I think that's an essential element but the things to look at would be first, cost.

The numbers that we ran were quite expensive. If this were a UN peacekeeping force, would the US and others be willing to do the assess contributions necessary to pay for it. If it's not a peacekeeping force but a UN sanctioned force, meaning it would be a multinational force sanctioned by the UN Security Council but not a UN force itself, still, would the contributing countries be willing to pay for it? Second thing is the troops. Who would go? Who would be the troops that would be on the ground? I don't think the Libyans would welcome Italians, for example, for historic reasons. I am not sure the United States would want to be there beyond certain counter-terrorism things because of ISIS and other reasons.

If you look at UN peacekeeping, I don't think the Libyans would want the type of south Asian and sub-Saharan African forces that make up most peacekeeping. I think the Libyans themselves would question that and the final question I would ask would be what's the actual mission and the anticipated tenure of that mission.

We've seen places where peacekeeping operations -- whether it's multinational force or an actual UN peacekeeping force, blue helmets are invited by a country, welcomed by a country but quickly outstay their welcome and are no longer seen as

the key element they were when they were invited in so those are the sorts of questions that I would ask and it led me to be one of the people that didn't support this. In terms of (inaudible) I mean I went with him to Bayda to see the head of the House of Representatives and have been with him in conversations with Haftar. I believe that Roslan Solani has done an unusually good job of reaching out across the political spectrum inside Libya.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Karim.

MR. MEZRAN: Of course it's a very difficult and nuanced topic. For me, it is something that has evolved from what it was in 2011, the purpose that forced the peacekeeping force would have had was totally different from the one they should have had in 2014 or the one we talked about in 2016 and even for today. Is it going to forced to support the government or is it going to be forced to support two governments or is it a force that is going to support a new consensus born in the government that needs some teeth on the ground to progress it?

We should know what the need on the ground is the moment it could be asked so just speaking theoretically, it is impossible to address the single objection and the single question that very brilliantly Jeff has posed. There are no answers to give now. If it is to support police force, it has one characteristic.

It could be done by certain countries and not by others because of competence. If it is a peacekeeping force, it would be followed by a different kind of command -- I know it's very vague.

I know I cannot provide an answer but it would be silly of me to come into details that have not been addressed because we don't know who is going to ask for it and under what conditions and precisely for what purpose.

MR. O'HANLON: Fred.

MR. WEHREY: Well just to add to all of those issues about an external force. Again, I think the issue of consent was so important that apparently in -- after the fall of Gaddafi, the transitional council was paranoid about even letting the UN let their security

people in. I mean there was just a real sensitivity to any sort of armed, foreign armed force to include the embassy forces as well just for protection so I think that paranoia is still with us. Although I have heard various Libyan officials, some militia leaders say they would welcome a force, provided it was a right nationality and again, they have a list of nationalities they don't want which are sort of the ones with baggage so they are talking about Scandinavians, Australians, that they would welcome but again the issue of mandates. Would this force have enough firepower to deter a militia attack but without provoking any sort of foreign intervention force, given the geography of the militias in Tripoli and the environs, you would have to have some sort of deal or relationship with another militia and so how long before you're perceived as siding with a particular faction just by virtue of your location and so the narrative I think could change, you know, very very quickly and so the force could be perceived as not neutral.

I mean some Libyans said perhaps if you had an external force out of the population center, out of people's sights down in the dessert securing the oil field, perhaps a form -- I mean that might be palatable but again, a force inside populated centers, again, I think could be very problematic from optics, from force protection, from mandate, from all of these issues. On the issue of Haftar meetings, Sarraj, I mean yeah, there is a real asymmetry there. I think that's why the army unification talks have stalled. Again, Sarraj has nothing to sort of offer on his side in terms of the unification.

I mean he has these militias, Haftar's LNA which we can agree is much more fragmented and more of a coalition than appearances suggest but at least he does have some semblance of command so there is an asymmetry. When I was in Libya, a real concern was yes, the municipalities in the south are not with the LNA. Is the LNA going to allow municipal councils to function? Are they going to militarize governance as they have done in the past? What are the implications of that for international development and assistance efforts where the LNA could basically take the aid and spin it and use it to brand itself and say we are doing the good governance, we are the interlocutors, so you're

basically empowering a form of governance that is unelected, that is military and is that something that we want to be doing so these are real questions. I mean we face them in the east, now we have them in the south. My sense is a lot of the people in the south, they welcome the security that the LNA has provided but how long is this going to last, you're already seeing some fragmentation.

They don't necessarily -- just because they welcome the security, they don't necessarily want Haftar to rule so we have to sort of divide this out.

MS. FASANOTTI: I think that -- I mean I was for a UN force because I think that first of all, a UN force should be in Libya just because Libyans asked for this. So let's start from this assumption. So if Libyans ask for a force, that would be very useful in my opinion because of controlling the terrain and because the historical experience I have is that it's much easier to have a peace process with an external force controlling the situation without anyone.

MS. FRIEND: I so rarely disagree with my friend but I was one of the folks that was skeptical of a peacekeeping force.

Primarily because I think political equilibrium needs to obtain before you're going to get a successful peacekeeping operation.

Peace enforcement is a whole other can of worms as well and also just because -- and I might just be falling under the cognitive bias of analogical reasoning but I have lived through US efforts to support the UN mission in Mali, AMISOM in Somalia, the UN mission in the Central African Republic and MONUSCO which is the effort to help stabilize Eastern Congo and through a variety of its evolutions and I just saw those as problematic from the perspective of that political equilibrium had not obtained prior to imposing the peacekeeping force and so in all of those missions, you just see an enduring re-up of the mandate over and over and over again with sort of no end in sight.

So I wasn't convinced that we had hit a point in Libya yet where a peacekeeping force would actually be an accelerant on stability.

MR. O'HANLON: I think we will leave it at that and on behalf of John Allen, and everyone here at Brookings, thank you for coming, thanks to the ambassador, thanks to the panel and the task force and best wishes to you all.

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