

Western Engagements

SPEECHES IN WASHINGTON DC AND LONDON

BY AREF ALI NAYED



KALAM RESEARCH & MEDIA
KNOWLEDGE VILLAGE, DUBAI

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Design and typesetting by Sohail Nakhoda at Kalam Research & Media, Dubai.

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Libya's Propects

IS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ACHIEVABLE?

by AREF ALI NAYED

LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES,
LONDON (14TH DECEMBER 2018).

LECTURE CHAIRED BY DR VIRGINIA COMOLLI, HEAD OF CONFLICT, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME AT THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES.

Hello, good afternoon, this is Virginia Comolli from IISS. A warm welcome to all of you. Today we have the opportunity for an on-the-record discussion with Dr Aref Ali Nayed who is currently the chairman of Kalam Research & Media and chairman of the Libyan Institute for Advanced Studies. He is also the former ambassador of Libya to the UAE. As you all know, Libya is seeing turbulent times and during the past four years, increased political fragmentation and insecurity have really given rise to a deep, deep crisis. Today we have the opportunity in this conversation to discuss the options for political settlement.

I NEVER INTENDED to be a politician. I was a theologian, academic, philosopher and businessman because of family considerations. I got involved in the Libyan revolution very early on—from the second day of it!

It's a long story which I won't bother you with. I was there in the initial anguish and the aspirations and enthusiasm that were combined in the Libyan revolution.

We had high hopes for the country: hopes for a dignified life and the rule of law, with mutual respect, respect for human rights, for women and men of Libya, and opportunities for young people.

Unfortunately, as a participant of that revolution, there is not a day that I not feel quite, I wouldn't say guilty, but deeply upset and disappointed at the state of affairs which we have reached and are living in.

The suffering of the Libyan people has increased rather than decreased. The number of people that have been killed or severely injured is vast. It's in the tens of thousands. The level of poverty has increased. Basic services have collapsed. The misery of the common Libyan folk has dramatically increased over the last eight years.

It's led many people to look back with nostalgia to the period before the revolution. Some people are saying that we should have never had the revolution. They are saying: "if only we could have Gaddafi back. And if we cannot have him back, maybe we can have his son back."

I think there are a lot of deep regrets. I personally also feel these regrets and part of my motivation for declaring my candidacy for the presidential elections was precisely the feeling that if you break something, you are responsible, you kind of own it. And you need to try and help.

There's been a lot of breakage in Libya. We've basically had a civil war, a multi-faceted

civil war that has been quite costly. Now we are trying to get out of this situation and the most agreed-upon basis for getting out of this situation is what's called the Libyan Political agreement which was signed in Skhirat (Morocco) in December 2015.

There is what religious people call a mantra which everybody now repeats and I will repeat it here too. We all support the process of UNSMIL and the Skhirat accords and we all support the LPA and we support Mr Ghassan Salamé and his endeavour to reach a political settlement between the parties in Libya. There is no military solution to delegating the crisis. I agree with all this and I will tell you that we have worked very hard at LIAS to help the process and to help the LPA be implemented and to help the UN and Ghassan Salamé—as we helped Martin Kobler and before him, and all his predecessors. I had the honour bringing the first UN envoy into Libya when I was the head of the Libya Stabilisation Team and we have continued to work with every single one of them ever since.

However, I must say that there have been some major disappointments recently and I would try to summarise them by saying that the LPA, even though we celebrated and we wanted it, has never been implemented.

The LPA foresees a collective decision-making mechanism in a council of nine people and right now we have de-facto single-man rule by the head of the Presidency Council, who has never been elected. He was not on the list proposed by the parliament and he was not on the list of the GNC, but was handpicked by the United Nations.

His rule was supposed to be, together with his colleagues, for a year with the provision of ruling a second year.

He just finished his third year and now we are going towards his fourth year. Many of the LPA's provisions—there's a huge section which is called the building of trust measures—were never implemented. The release of prisoners has not been implemented. The return of deportees and displaced people has not been implemented. The empowerment of women has not been implemented. The Women Empowerment Unit is actually run in a very cliqueish way that has not really led to real empowerment. Youth has not been empowered. Economic equity is not there. None of the provisions of the LPA have been implemented. So many people, when they want to object what is happening in Libya, they go against the Shkirat accord. But I do the opposite. I believe in the Shkirat accord. I think it was a great document but the problem is that it has never been implemented.

The second group of concerns is the breaking of promises. Mr Ghassan Salamé, who is a dear friend and I have tremendous respect for him as an academic and a friend, came in with a very clear map. He said: “We are going to have a process. This process will have certain dimensions. Most importantly we are going to try to renegotiate the LPA and we are going to try to do a general conference and we are going to have elections by the end of the year.”

And I took him at his word and I believed him, so I declared my candidacy thinking that we were going to have an election even before the election was clear.

It's like bringing your car to a car race where the ring hasn't been built and where the rules of the race have not been declared. But I felt that I must do it, in order to make the point that we need elections. So I was hoping that this declaration to stand for the presidency would lead others to declare and then that maybe when we have enough candidates, we are going to have an election.

The year has passed, despite the conference in Paris which actually set deadlines:

Deadline for having a constitutional framework in October and then December elections. The 10th of December was the date. That date has come and gone. There has not been a delivery on elections. On the contrary, there was a huge amount of work put into sabotaging the results of the Paris accords. And our Italian colleagues, God bless them, made sure they lengthened the process and the Palermo meeting had no tangible results except one: the prolongation of our agony until the spring of 2019.

We are now promised elections in spring 2019. As you know, spring is springy and the timing is a bit fluid, but it does have a technical definition. We are assured of something before August, to put it broadly. Because the Italians will go to their summer holidays, so I'm sure they will consider the elections before that. So that's all that was accomplished in Palermo.

Palermo clearly showed that there were divisions, that there was no coherence. People were coming and going. Some people intended to attend but did not attend. Some people refused to attend and then they said "yes" and then they refused again. Some people came but walked out. It was a mess, but it succeeded in one thing. Which is to sabotage the results of the French efforts.

I think it's nonsense to have a French effort countered by an Italian effort. It's not going to lead us anywhere. I think we all should be sensible and agree on a way forward. I believe, and I hope this is taking correctly, that the situation is so dreadful and disastrous from a humanitarian point of view. I don't see the Libyan people bearing with this anymore or having the patience beyond the summer of 2019. The South is already very angry. They actually have a movement that is called the Anger of Fezzan ("Fezzan Rage"). And they have just shut down the oil supply from the south. The East is very angry, and the West is very angry. Everybody is very angry. The only people who are not angry are the clique that are ruling us today, who, despite all their differences—easterners, westerns and southerners—unite in what can be called the status quo party, which is united in the extraction of benefits from the wealth of Libya, and are also united in the prolongation of this status quo for as long as possible. Contrary to appearances, this situation is quite ideal for people who are benefitting from it.

I believe that if we don't get beyond this impasse there would be another revolt by the Libyan people.

I foresee a rather destabilised Libya if we don't have the discipline and the courage to give Libyan people back their votes and to give them the right to choose who governs the country and who manages the affairs of the country.

So is there a way out?

Yes, there is a way out.

Implement the LPA, ok?

Implement the LPA to the letter and prepare for elections as soon as possible.

And if the House of Representatives (HoR), and the State Council are going to use the powers invested in them to sabotage elections, I believe that elections should be imposed under Chapter Seven of the United Nations Charter.

That chapter was used to interfere in Libya to break the previous state and regime. I do not see why it cannot be used to reinstate legitimacy in Libya under a general election.

The notion that we have a security crisis and because of that we cannot have elections is nonsense. The security crisis is much better than 2014 and I think we can have elections even under the existing security situation, and we can even have a better situation if the United Nations puts a structure of a pan-Libyan force from all over Libya under joint

command by say 70 officers from across the country who can be picked through the process of unifying the Libyan army, which is happening in Egypt with some foreign advisors being part of the monitoring mechanism. There is no need for boots on the ground by any foreign troops. I think Libyan troops can secure the elections, provided there is joint command and some monitoring and vetting mechanism. Such as that the force would only include professional soldiers with proper military numbers.

So I think there are solutions. So, when people say that the conditions are not there for elections, it's very important that they tell us why and tell us how we can rectify these conditions. To use this excuse to prolong the status quo is to basically legitimize a period of prolonged thievery, corruption and oppression of the Libyan people and deprivation of the Libyan people who are suffering from not receiving basic services.

These are the opening remarks. I will stop here. I think it will be much more productive to address specific questions.

“Am I optimistic?”, one of your colleagues asked just when I entered. Yes, I am optimistic because it's a human duty to be optimistic. I believe that faith and charity and hope are fundamental to human existence and I think we will make it, and Libya will be a better place. However, I think we need everyone's help and the most important help we need is respect for the will of the Libyan people and giving the Libyan people the right they revolted for and that they suffered for and they sacrificed for. The right to choose their own leadership. Thank you very much for listening.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Despite your description, you retain some optimism. Can I ask about the issue of reconstruction? How do you see prospects for the reconstruction of Libya? That Libyans could be leading on. Do you see international parts involved in it? And if so, who?

First of all, I believe that reconstruction is not only feasible in Libya but is something that can happen rather quickly because of the resources that Libya does have. Even with its faults and assets and the debilitating thievery that has been happening there are enough resource and reserves to be able to do this.

I think for it to happen we need five things. First, we need a mechanism for governance and transparency that is an absolute necessity. Corruption is rampant in Libya, not only in the west or the east only but in the south also. Corruption is everywhere. Unless we have proper governance and transparency and public tendering processes that are clear and out there on the cloud that everyone can see, nothing is going to happen.

The second thing that we need is some sort of portfolio management regime and project management regime. Some sort of PMO for the city construction that will be centralised—not in the sense of controlling everything, but everything has to be properly monitored and vetted and compared to benchmarks and performances, and deliverables have to be measured. Such a mechanism can be done under what is called the Economic Development Board which has the requisite laws and which can be part of the future prime minister's office. It already technically and legally exists. It just has to be done competently and rely not only on Libyan expertise, but hire some experts to help us, and with a PMO function to monitor such construction.

The third thing that we need is to do a serious decentralisation in the assessment of needs and the decision on what projects are needed, and the implementation and the monitoring

of these projects. I believe that the municipality should be a vital part of this reconstruction effort and there has to be a decentralisation in the assessment of needs and implementing. But centralisation must remain in the monitoring and the quality assurance to make sure that deliverables are delivered on time and according to budget.

Much of the turmoil in Libya and even the civil war has to do precisely with the lack of fair distribution of the countries' revenues, and the feeling of injustice, which is quite serious in various areas of the country. The south, for example, where kids die because of scorpion attacks and where there are no antidotes available. There are hospitals where people die because of the lack of medicine for cancer treatment, or because of the lack of surgical basics, you know.

This is not right. That is why people are angry. Decentralisation is extremely important, but at the same time, we do need some sort of unified vision and some sort of follow-up mechanism to make sure that there is fairness and fair distribution of everything.

The fourth thing that we need for reconstruction is a serious look at the structure of the Libyan economy. In the old days of political economists, be it David Ricardo or Adam Smith or Marx, there was this notion that an economy consisted of three dimensions: land, capital and labour. The Gaddafi regime managed to manipulate all three and it has been quite corrosive of all three dimensions. The land registry was burned, the capital was confiscated and nationalised in 1978 and 1979. The labour unions were made into revolutionary entities. Unless we restore the sanity to the fundamentals of the Libyan economy nothing will happen. Unfortunately, since the demise of Gaddafi and the end of the revolution, there has been no work on the fundamentals of the Libyan economy. As a matter of fact, some people have found it very convenient to perpetuate the structures that Gaddafi installed. A centralised central bank is very convenient for those who control the governor. A centralised NOC is very convenient for those who control the NOC and a centralised everything is very convenient for the ones who have the leaders of that central whatever. These things have to be completely revamped and restructured.

The fifth thing we need is to convince people to invest in Libya and to convince people to invest in Libya. I think there is a very old principle that my father taught me that presses memory "do not expect people to invest in you or with you if you are not investing in yourself". Thus, if Libya does not invest in Libya, we should not expect other people to invest in Libya. Libya has vast investments in Africa, we have hotels. We have telecom licences.

We have all sorts of things all over the place. Even in London, we have investments, but we don't invest in Libya. This has to change. And we need to build up the confidence for foreign investors by having a proper legal framework. By having proper processes and procedures. Fair processes. People want to see clarity and transparency and firm guarantees that they are not going to get their property confiscated or that they are going to be able to repatriate their money, and so forth.

So I think if we'd have these five dimensions covered we should be able to reconstruct Libya in a way that can leap-frog over the neighbouring countries and the region. I believe there's no reason to believe Libya cannot be the leading country in the region if we actually reconstruct in the manner that I have outlined.

We have been talking about the reconstruction of the licit economy but there's also a lot of illicit economy going around human trafficking and beyond. How do you suggest that is addressed.

I believe that the work of Hernando De Soto, the South American economist, is extremely significant on the importance of documenting informal economies. For example, I believe that the transactions of real estate in Libya need to change. These transactions are quite opaque. We don't know who owns things because people have been contracting just by doing simple contracts with a muharrar al uqud, a notary public, the registration for such transactions being closed for a long time.

I believe that we will need to bring that opaqueness, that darkness, into the light. We have to document such real estate transactions and with the use of technology such as blockchain, etc., we can also create mapping and tagging for properties and so on. We need to work very hard to make that which is under the surface quite apparent. Only if you have a proper land register can you have collateral for loans which are necessary for starting small and middle sized businesses.

Also, there has been a lot of transaction in currency. Many of the Libyan dinars are nowhere to be found. We don't know who is storing them and where. We need to study measures to make sure our dinar is clear.

Our dinars and our currency supply have to be clear. Our gold reserves have to be clear and certified and recertified. Our lands have to be certified. The more clarity we have, the more sunshine we have, the less weird creatures we will have lurking beneath the rocks.

You are right to point that out. As for human trafficking and smuggling and so on, part of the solution is to lift the subsidies. We are currently buying gasoline and its being smuggled back into Malta and Tunis and Chad.

I believe that we should be implementing a basic national income for all Libyans and the portions allotted to Libyans for the support of gasoline, for example, should be given to them on smart cards and not in subsidies on the product itself. Everything should be sold at the right price. That will immediately stop the smuggling of fuel, which is fuelling quite a few other smuggling activities.

As for the human trafficking and human migration, I believe that this is a complex issue that has to be worked at in partnership with the EU. This is not a problem that is uniquely Libyan. I think the current solution that the Sarraj government is implementing and which Italy's Interior Minister, Mr Salvini, is very happy about is very bad for Libya. It's basically the Italian solution to block the African immigrants going to Italy by catching them in Libyan waters so that they are now the responsibility of the Libyan state. And mister Salvini is very happy about that.

But what does that do to Libya and what does that, more importantly, do to these humans beings who are held in holding facilities that are not worthy of animals, let alone of humans. The slavery that is happening, the killing, the raping that is happening are on the conscience not only of Libya but also of Europe. This is not right and must be stopped. How do you make this stop?

This is not something we can solve on our own. We must convene a regional meeting on this. I believe that one of the keys to solving this is making sure that the differential is not so large. People are not leaving their home because they like Europe, but because they are dying. They are dying because of global warming that they are not causing. They are dying because of economic development that they are deprived of, which is not their fault. So what can we do that people stay in their place and what can Libya do in terms of

agricultural projects in the south that can actually offer jobs to our African neighbours so that we can benefit and they can benefit?

We need more sensible solutions. The idea of blockage and just keeping them incarcerated, and just keeping them in holding facilities in Libya is a moral wrong! It's wrong for Libya and it's wrong for Italy also.

Thank you, Dr Aref. If I may say, we should get back to the building blocks. You sound as if you want to create a state, you sound as if you want to work with a state. We call it a hybrid state or all the new definitions of state. But to me, you sounded like you wanted to work with the state as a system. I believe for a system to function it has to have control, an army, police. It has to be able to control its borders—the basic Voltairian definition of a state, if I may be classical rather than modernist in my terms. What we do with the militias? We jumped ahead when we talked about investments etc., but we can go back to the building blocks, and think that's where our problem is. We haven't got past step one.

We inherited the militias, we worked with the militias. The weak NTC initially needed the militias but they enshrine themselves. Every successive prime minister has enshrined them, worked with them and some would say they controlled them, definitely in Tripoli. What are the new carrots and sticks that you may see in your manifesto that will solve this big problem? Whatever type of state you want, be it decentralised, three regions with very loose, kind of strong regional governments.

We haven't get passed step one. Nobody till today has been able to do so. This new security arrangement that first Sarraj and your good friend Salamé are so happy about is cosmetic, if I may say so. They are doing nothing. Yes, the jury has given up. Juwaili has obtained a couple of sites here and there but the militias are still there and really until you convince me as a voter that you are able do to something about the militia, you or any other candidate, we are still going around in the same circle. The basic problem is still there. We haven't got beyond our militias. What ideas do you have for that?

Regarding the militias. It's basically a monster. But it's a monster that has a wire. And that wire is plugged into an electrical outlet. That outlet is called the Central Bank of Libya. Libya has the unique feature of paying its own killers to kill it. I think the first thing that we need to do is stop the nonsense of paying salaries to the very people who are killing us and kidnapping us and who are destroying the country.

The practice of paying militias that was started in the NTC, which I objected against fiercely when I was the head of the Libya Stabilisation Team, that is turning young people into mercenaries basically. It has to stop. The control on the Central Bank of Libya is an absolutely important issue.

The current monopoly of a certain small clique of people who totally control the Central Bank, the trade finance, the letters of credits and control the currency has to stop. And unless the Central Bank of Libya is taken out of the clutches of these people, nothing will happen. That is why when the NOC retook the control of the oil flow under tremendous international pressure on the army and the army obliged and gave the control to Mustafa Sanallah and his NOC, there was a simultaneous promise that the Central Bank of Libya would be audited and be brought under some sort of oversight.

First, there was the excuse that we don't want to interfere with Libyan sovereignty and this has to be requested by the Libyan government. Then Mr Sarraj wrote the letter and sent it, and then they said, "oh thank you for the letter but the framework is really not that clear, so we have to clarify the framework and we have to do an exercise to identify the

framework that we are going to use.” And that to some extent happened. And then the latest thing they said is like “now we have to identify some auditing companies that will come to do the auditing.”

What I’m trying to say is that so long as the Central Bank is in the hands of thugs who support thugs, nothing will happen. My solution to the monster is to unplug the monster in the first place.

Secondly, if you actually look at the number of these people. There has been mapping of these militias and they are not that big in their number. And yet, you look at the numbers of people who take salaries, they are very large. But the real fighting force, if you analyse, who is actually doing the fighting it’s not more than 200 here, 150 there, 300 here. I believe that a pan-Libyan force of 5,000, plus a mobile rapid deployment force of 500 special operations soldiers with proper command and a small air cover of no more than six aircraft are more than enough to hammer any militia that dares to raise its head against the state.

Nobody has dared to do this. The reason is that the so-called security arrangements that were supposed to happen under the Skhirat accords are a complete sham. Unfortunately, the Italian general who was the head of the UN team basically cut a deal with the Tripoli militias to protect Italian interests in Tripoli and then the gas industry and some of the cliques that control Tripoli.

This is a corrupt practice that was given UN legitimacy. This is wrong, and this wrong continues by actually giving the interior ministry to someone who has huge grievances against his person from the victims of Ghargour, victims of Bani Walid, the victims of Warshafana, the victims of Garabulli. It was wrong of the UN to bless the instalment of the new ministers in Sarraj’s government within two hours of their naming. It’s just wrong. This is not going to solve anything.

What I would do about the militias? Cut out the money and build out a credible pan-Libyan force under proper professional command. Tell them to surrender or die. That’s what I would do with the militias.

Two questions for you. The first is about the Cairo talks. There is been considerable confusion about talks with Haftar. Is there a solution for that? Second about the interference of foreign powers on this issue. We are seeing that foreign powers and international organisations are willing to offering assistance to the rebuilding of the Libyan security forces. NATO has offered assistance, UK too, Italy and Germany too, there’s been Turkey too and Russia. Do you think that this is detrimental to the Libyan crisis?

The Cairo talks have been a long process. I think they finished 6 sessions now and we’re entering the seventh. There are already some preliminary things this week. This process has started, and I don’t think this has made public, but you can check with Colonel Salem Juha, who was my military attaché at my embassy at Abu Dhabi. We worked on a basic document on this long ago. He took that document to Sarraj and then to Egyptians and then to various other people. This process was basically started by a Misrata military man in the person of Salem Juha. So to say that Misrata is not interested in the unification of the Libyan army is not the case. I personally know Salem Juha, Muhammed Haddad and many of the ranked officers of Misrata and they to negotiate with the rest of the Libyan army.

Certain institutions in Libya are uniquely national. The army is one. The Libyan military college was pan-Libyan. All the officers lived with other officers and were trained with other officers all over Libya. So the officer class of Libya is actually quite pan-Libyan. They are not regionally minded.

Another institution is the boys and girl scouts of Libya and the third one is the Red Crescent. These institutions are pan-Libyan par excellence.

Yes, there are concerns at any attempt to monopolise the leadership of the Libyan army. Yes, I totally agree that they have such concerns but I think that from what I know they are quite open to a structure of joint command. The question is how to do it. The officers who are working in the Cairo Meetings are actually professional Libyan officers some of whom are actually legal officers and they are doing an amazing job to generate structures with checks and balances that can comfort everyone.

The last stage of filling in the positions is the hardest stage. But I believe that we are very close. And it's the wrong time to abandon that process. I cannot see how we can make any step forward unless we unify the Libyan army as the questioner has just pointed out. I believe the unification of the Libyan army is easier if it is done in a pilot mode first. And what I suggested to the leadership of the army in the east and some of the officers in the west is that we test out the unification by making a pan-Libyan election protection force. So we say that we want to create a force of 5,000 people with maybe a 150 commanding officers and with a joint command to manage the whole process. If you do it for a specific task, an ad-hoc force just for the elections, that could very well develop into the seed of a unified Libyan army. And I think we are very close. I think we should not despair. I have supported the Egyptian process in every interview I have made those because I truly believe that it is actually very encouraging that the officers of Misrata and Zintan and the east and the south are all working together. I think the Egyptian army officers are closer to unification than the politicians are.

My question would be, perhaps I'm wrong when a very large of number of actors both domestic and international mention the reason why the elections in Libya have not been easy and able to be achieved so far. There are a number of very concrete facts: lack of an election law, lack of a constitution, security set-up that is not shared internally, a security situation that has already been described and so forth. You said that there was a sort of conspiracy to push this process endlessly but in fact nobody does. Wasn't Italy not adopting those acts? Those things simply haven't been done within a timeframe that was too optimistic, it seems when agreed in Paris. Then later in Palermo, we reconvened with a much larger number of actors and they all stood behind Salamé's effort and action plan which was endorsed and also changed in a way too, to build on Paris accord. Our reasoning on Palermo as being a way to postpone elections it sounds rhetorically captivating for politicians but I just don't understand why you would say that.

On another issue on the approach of migration, I would like to rectify. You described as a part of it, which is the building the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guard and Libyan security forces as a way for Libya to develop that status as a state that it wants to and rightly wants to achieve. But at the same time I think that's a facet of a multi-faceted strategy which is the European strategy which, as you know, has a domestic, internal dimension, an external dimension. And a part of the external dimension is to do exactly what you said, to work with Africa, with the countries from where most of the migrants come from and have them build the conditions to avoid this uncontrolled migration. As you know Italy has financed and keeps on financing together with Germany most of the Valletta Trust Fund which was established by the EU as a way to support investment and development in Africa. And we are very, very committed to that as well. If you focus just on one aspect which is an aspect that we need to put in place in order to avoid a domestic

backlash of what is happening in terms of migration. But it's clearly not a long term vision , and I agree with you, but by single handily focusing on that you give a bit of a misleading, if I may say, picture of what we're trying to do together with the European Union.

First of all. All interpretation is highlighting as Gadamer says. And when you have a book and you put yellow markers on certain lines you inevitably neglect the other lines but maybe the emphasis on certain points will bring out exactly the kind of comments you brings out. It's good that we discuss this. I think I amply explained that we need a comprehensive policy and that it is a multi-national effort and that it has multi-dimensions and I talked about the differential and the economic. But what I have issues with is not that you're training our Coast Guard but I have issues with the agreement that you signed with Sarraj. The agreement you signed with Sarraj is in violation of Libyan sovereignty. And Sarraj might be a lovely guy to keep and signs all the papers you give him, but it's very bad for Libya. It's a bad deal. I revolted against Gaddafi, but the 2008 deal under Gaddafi is a much better deal than the Sarraj deal. The Sarraj deal was never negotiated properly, it never was passed by the elected Libyan parliament. It was actually challenged in court and Sarraj lost the case in court. This is an illegal treaty that was signed and it actually basically results in a million immigrants staying in Libya rather than going to Italy. If they would be going to you they would be distributed according to a European population that is quite vast. When they stay in Libya they are one-sixth of the population. That is what I have an objection against. It's not that you are training the Coast Guard, which was according to the 2008 agreement anyway, and for which Libya is paying.

Now regarding the contributions, I salute your contributions to the Valletta Fund and what you are doing for development and so on. But when it comes to Libya, I absolutely, as a Libyan, feel insulted each time I see some country bragging about a 200,000 Euro donation when the interest on our frozen funds is in the billions. That is what I have contentions with.

Now regarding the Palermo accord. I believe that the French made a huge mistake by not doing enough diplomatic consultation with other countries. I admit this. I believe that this has to do with the fact that this was done at the presidency level and not through the foreign ministry of France. And maybe more should have been done for outreach and having other people on board. However, I believe once we had dates and once we had four major stakeholders in Libya agreeing for the first time, everybody should have celebrated this. Everybody should have stood behind this, and everybody should have kept everybody, held everybody accountable for this. Instead, we had everybody making up excuses for not implementing the date for the elections. With all due respect, you have changed the ambassador now. There's the new italian ambassador, Giuseppe Buccino, who has now Perrone. Perrone, came on my TV channel. He spoke for two hours and during those two hours managed to give very much the impression that Italy was not for the Libyan elections for December 2018. And the ambassador is a friend of mine and I went to Italy and we sorted all this out and I'm sure it was a big misunderstanding. However, I spoke to the Italian Foreign Minister and told him that if you want Palermo to succeed then build on the Paris accords. Don't destroy Paris, because Paris gave us a deadline. Instead, we have this prolongation. Thank God, through the convolutions we have managed to salvage the principle at least that elections in Libya are going to happen. At least with some sort of rough deadline of the spring of 2019. So I did say that there are positive results from Palermo—namely at least that we didn't obliterate the elections. However, I personally know first hand that there was no enthusiasm in Rome for the

results in Paris. And I think that hurts us a lot. Because Italy is extremely important. Italy is very close. If there was an Italian endorsement of the dates established in Paris accord, it would have been a very different situation.

Now regarding the constitutional framework. Because sometimes people argue for things that make absolute sense and sound rhetorically convincing. However, the core is wrong. One of the main arguments that are used is “We have been through too much transition”; eight years of transitions; we need a permanent state; only a constitution can give us a permanent basis for the government; election must be based on the constitution”. Sounds elegant, right? But you failed to see that this constitutional draft has issues and objections from the so-called indigenous population of the Tebu, the Tuareg and the Amazigh and therefore violates the UN standards on the rights of the original other peoples of the country.

Secondly, it has some weird provisions about Shari‘a that actually makes it indistinguishable from the constitution that the Khalifate of ISIS wanted to implement. Thirdly, it has serious issues for the people of the east of Libya who fear that it is a centralised constitution that will oppress them. And fourthly is a point that hardly ever discussed, that the members of the steering committee got paid 600,000 dinars each according to the audit report, two weeks before they approved the draft. What I’m trying to say: It’s not exactly a consensus constitution. Mind you, the parliament said ok. We still have to go to the referendum. And they just passed the referendum law. But because the Islamists in Tripoli who control the State Council don’t like it, they have just objected to the decrees of the parliament. Even though it says in the Skhirat accord that they should be advisory and not legislative. They made themselves into a Second Chamber with the blessing and support of some western countries and now we have this impasse again.

So, bear again in mind that Libya for 42 years was run based on a constitutional decree in 1970 and it has been run for eight years on a constitutional decree of 2011 that has now just has undergone its 11th amendment. The constitutional framework does not necessarily mean a constitution. Even the Skhirat accords itself has enough provision to be a constitutional framework.

There is a decree Number 5 for the year 2014 based on the recommendations of the February Committee that actually shows you how you can have a presidential election, how you can have parliamentary elections. It does have a separation of powers. It explains all the powers of the presidency. It explains what the checks and balances are. It explains how oversight works. We have enough basis for elections. The only reason we are not having an election is because they are not in the best interests of the ruling class that is now ruling us. And it is not in the best interests of countries who are benefiting from having free signatures from the Sarraj government. And that’s the real issue. And I asked the Italian government through the foreign ministry to keep in mind Italy’s strategic long term interest in Libya, to make sure that you serve the interest of the Italian people and the Libyan people and not the use the expediency of a docile government that is signing anything you give it because that will backfire on you in the future.

Thank you Dr Aref for your talk. My field is law and direct investment and my PhD is about the legal protection over Libya. My question will be about the Libyan Investment Authority. Dr Aref, I’m sure you read the news about the frozen money belonging to Libyan Investment Authority which is now in Belgium and other countries. The question is: What is your idea about that? And how can Libya protect the frozen funds now that

there is such big corruption in Libya nowadays? And there are different countries like the UK or Belgium or Luxemburg talking about how they can use that money for different issues.

The reason our frozen funds are in danger is because of our divisiveness. If there's a unified government of Libya that is duly elected and mandated by the Libyan people there would be sufficient unity for it to be able to protect these funds. Unfortunately, several countries have had the habit of jumping over our assets using the excuse of the fight between the two "Libyas". So that whenever somebody in the east or the west fights the only beneficiary is the country that happens to be holding the funds. This has happened and caused us to lose licences. Telecom licences in some African countries. We have lost certain properties in Africa because of this fighting. Even in this country, the fight over the LIA has led to the judicial oversight over certain assets of Libya. The best way to protect our assets is to be united. Unfortunately, there is too much personal interest and the only losers are the Libyan people. I cannot see how this can stop until you have a proper government.

What I'd like people to notice are the deals that they do right now. Because all sorts of deals are being made and all sorts of contracts are being signed. I believe that because the Sarraj government has never gotten the confidence of the parliament, there is a real legal ground for suing anybody who has signed deals with the Sarraj government for anything. And unless you have a clear basis for contracts, you should not be doing those contracts. Unfortunately, people have been seeing this as an opportunity. So they cut deals left, right and centre. People sell, buy and give concessions. Who's Sarraj? Sarraj tried to form a government twice and the parliament said no twice. According to the rules of the parliament, that precludes him from attempting to form a third government.

Somehow, the United Nations says that they believe in the legitimacy of the Libyan parliament. And this is enshrined in the LPA but at the same time they recognise the Sarraj government which is not recognized by the recognized Parliament. And then people say: "Why are you Libyans so divisive? Why can't you unite" Why are you splitting your country?"

You're splitting our country by having this double recognition. Either you say "To hell with the parliament. We recognise Sarraj", or you do the opposite. You recognise the parliament and you tell them to choose the government. But to say I recognise Sarraj and I recognise you but you don't recognise Sarraj but that's OK. That's a formula to divide the country. Which happens to be very convenient. I'm not a believer of conspiracy theories, but this is resulting in what looks like a conspiracy against the unity of Libya. So to go back to the Libyan Investment Authority, anyone who has assets of the Libyan Investment Authority should act with morality now and protect these assets. The Libyan state, once it becomes strong again, I'm sure, will sue anyone who touched a penny of the Libyan people, be they Libyan or non Libyan. The Libyan mafia has to be put in jail but so does Maltese mafia and Italian and Turkish mafia. Despite their divisiveness they are quite united in ripping us off.

Thank you. I'm afraid we reached the end of this session. I'm quite grateful to you Dr. Aref for actually ending talking about the human dimension. Because sometimes we forget that in the geo-political discussions. We forget about the people and the challenges they have to face in their everyday life. Of course, there's challenges ahead. We wish you and Libya all the best. Thank you very much for the passionate discussion and interventions. Thank you Dr. Aref.



PHOTOS FROM THE LECTURE DELIVERED BY DR AREF ALI NAYED AT THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, LONDON (14TH DECEMBER 2018).

Libya

TRAUMA, HEALING AND OPEN HORIZONS

by AREF ALI NAYED

LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION IN WASHINGTON, DC (7TH MARCH 2017).

LECTURE CHAIRED BY DR JOSHUA MESERVEY, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST FOR AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST AT THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION. PANELISTS WERE DR AREF ALI NAYED AND REP. PETER HOEKSTRA, FORMER MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

I COME TO YOU FROM A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION. I have been travelling now for over three weeks, to over 9 countries trying to do the liaisons and the discussions to overcome the political impasse that we have been witnessing, which I will explain in a moment. And just as we speak al-Qaeda Forces that are legitimized by the Presidential Council and the Government of National Accord (GNA), directly or indirectly, which is recognized by the UN and the US government and the rest of the international community, have managed to take two of the most important oil installations in Libya. The Libyan National Army (LNA) is amassing to try to push them back. We are in the midst of a fight and this discussion comes at a very opportune time, not only because the Parliament, the elected members under the authority of its Head, Chancellor Aguila Saleh, are worried and have asked me to convey their views and their perspective to the US Administration, but also the fact that, right now, if we don't manage to stabilize the country, we do risk a major civil war again in Libya.

So it is a very risky and difficult situation and I am grateful to the friends that made this visit to the US possible and made this discussion possible. I also thank Pete who is a dear friend, someone from whom I have learnt a great deal from this historical perspective because it is very important. But I would also like to caution that we shouldn't think of the Gaddafi period as the good times and then that this period is the bad period, because I was there in the revolution. I joined the revolution on its second day and I remember that it was a genuinely popular uprising, it wasn't just an Islamist conspiracy and it wasn't a foreign conspiracy. There was definitely a popular uprising. I would also, however, agree that the revolution, as many revolutions have, was hijacked very early by the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaeda elements. I myself suffered the marginalization and the pushing aside by these elements. I was the Head of the Libya Stabilization Team that wrote the post-revolution stabilization plan, but as soon as we got to Tripoli and managed to put the electricity and water back, and the fuel supply, order, and so on, I together with my 70 men and women team, pushed aside because the Islamists pressurized the Head of the National Transitional Council and the Head of the Executive Office to basically tell us "thank you very much, great work, submit now everything to the ministries and go away."

I had a very difficult choice at that time. Do you revolt against the Head of the National

Transitional Council after such a dreadful process of revolution? Or do you abide and basically try to go along with the government, hoping that there was enough resistance to Islamist ideas and Muslim Brotherhood ideas that the country would bounce back? I went back to my job, I was the first ambassador of the National Transitional Council in the UAE.

I went back to my ambassadorial work and got involved in fighting Islamists throughout these five years of office. As a matter of fact, I think many of them see me as one of their key opponents and, on a weekly basis they do character assassination; I hope not physical assassination, you know, I think maybe because I've been out of range. But the sad story of Libya is that we are always being given false dichotomies. The choice shouldn't be between fascists of the military type or fascists of the Islamist type. I think Libyans, like you, aspire for the same things you aspire for. They aspire for liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as the founding fathers would say. And instead of getting liberty, we have even more tyranny under the Islamists rule, and instead of the pursuit of happiness we have fallen to misery. The Libyan people are suffering greatly, have continued to suffer greatly, and their conditions have worsened. That is why trauma is in the title of this discussion. The Libyan people are traumatized.

The numbers of killings and kidnappings and maiming, the rise of prices, the collapse of the health system, the collapse of the educational system, the fuel shortages, inflation skyrocketing—all of these combine to produce a very traumatic situation for the Libyan people. And their choice should not be either stay under Islamist rule, which we currently have especially in Tripoli and the Western part of the country, or to replace that with the military rule. We want civilian oversight. We want civilian rule. We want democracy. We want the dignity of the human being, human rights in the most sacred of them, and the rights of man and woman. And we are not getting there. And we are not getting there because of deliberate sabotage. This Foundation here is part of state-building. It is based on the idea that the building of a country doesn't end, that every generation has a responsibility to continue to build the nation, and in building the nation you need to be rooted in your traditions and the vision of the founding fathers, but you also need to be open-minded, and open to new ideas and expand the principles of the founding fathers, so you continue to try and help to build the nation. And this Foundation has had a very important role in advising the Trump Administration and is helping to actually build the Trump team and has a lot of say in terms of advising especially in policy terms to the new Administration.

One of the key issues has been the policy that Pete has mentioned earlier, which is “the commitment”, the early commitment, of the previous US Administration to making things work with the Muslim Brotherhood, and to actually seeing them the key allies in rebuilding Libya. The problem with the Muslim Brotherhood is that it is actually a transnational organization with transnational aspirations. It is as simple as that. To build the country, you need people who are committed to the Nation State. It is very basic, I know, but it is very important to bear in mind. You cannot have partners in the building of a nation who don't believe in the nation state, but only believe in being parasitical on it to build their transnational agenda. Libya over the last six years spent something to the tune of US\$200 billion, of which the Libyan people have seen hardly anything. No new hospitals, no new roads, no new schools. Where did the money go? The money went to building the resources of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which is the name of the Libyan branch of al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda noticed what is called as a “tagging” syndrome, that the US and UN have, unfortunately, which is to designate groups by the tag. So if they change their name, their tag as it were, they are no longer chased. I know it sounds very strange but it is happening every day. So in Syria, you are actually arming al-Qaeda just because they changed their name. And I saw this horrific video of someone wearing Osama Bin Laden clothing saying that they are no longer associated with al-Qaeda and their name is such-and-such name. And the guy, even in his attire, is basically wearing the exact clothes of Osama Bin Laden with the exact flag behind him. And yet he is renamed and all of a sudden he is okay.

In Libya we had this phenomenon, which was called Ansar al-Sharia. And they used the black flag, they talked like Bin Laden, believed in the same doctrines as Bin Laden, the same Salafist jihadist doctrine. And they were called Ansar al-Sharia and all of a sudden they were tolerated in Benghazi and they were tolerated in Sirte where they were allowed to fester for years. As the National Security Advisor to Abdullah Al-Thinni, the Prime Minister of the Interim government of the eastern part of Libya, I came to this country several times, in 2013, 2014, and 2015. I warned that the Islamists are taking over and that they are making Libya into their ATM machine and fuel station or gas station and into a platform that will threaten the entire region including Europe. But I did not get any attention except from the Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG lobbyists in Washington, who kept calling me warmonger, alarmist, divisive and not inclusive enough.

This doctrine of false inclusivity is very important. It is a very important mistake that people make. We are told to be inclusive, but I ask you: Can German democracy survive the inclusion of the Nazis? Can Italian democracy survive the inclusion of the fascists of the Mussolini time? Can Spanish democracy survive the Franco type of fascism? It can't because you are trying to insert into the structure that leads to the rise of the state elements that are antithetical to the rise of the Nation State because they have transnational agendas. The Nazi Third Reich ambitions and racist policies cannot be reconciled with German democracy.

That is why the German constitution specifically stamps out the Nazis; but in the case of us in Libya, we kept being told by your own government that we are supposed to be inclusive of the Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG and they were forced upon us again and again. Even as they lost every single election. We had two major elections. The Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG combined, with all the variations of the Islamists, never got more than 5% of the electoral vote. And yet, we were told to give them 50% of the power through power-sharing mediated by the UN. Why? Because they happened to march on Tripoli when they lost the last election.

So, it is like Mussolini when he marched on Rome and assassinated his Marxist opponents and his leftist opponents, except this time they want us to bless our “Mussolinis”. And, under the UN flag, we were made to negotiate with these guys and being told to include them. What is the result? Through the Skhirat process we ended up having a Presidential Council of nine members who have to have consensus on anything. Out of those nine members, two declared Islamists. One Jihadist called Amari and another Muslim Brotherhood member called Kajman. And then a variety of others who were not able to resist them either through being under their influence or under their threat. And then the government, this Presidential Council, was forced to go into Tripoli under Islamist militia protection. So this is an Islamist infiltrated Presidential Council living under Islamist militia protection. Furthermore, to add insult to injury, they appointed a Defense Minister who actually celebrated al-Qaeda figures like Ismail Al-Sallabi and went to

inspect the troops in Jufrah, in the South, and actually ended up blessing a man called Sharkasi who led up to now seven attacks on Benghazi and on the Oil Crescent.

The head of the presidential council is a friend of mine. I kept urging him, appealing to him, I said: “look if you can’t resist these guys at least remove the legitimacy from them”. Because in its wisdom, the United Nations, with, of course, the full cooperation of the United States, the UK, the Italians, the French, recognize the Presidential Council and still recognize the Presidential Council. And even last week your Embassy in Tunis issued a statement of support, a joined statement of support for the Presidential Council. But no one pays attention to the infiltration. How can you bless and support a Defense Minister of a Government of National Accord that actually supports al-Qaeda? And this is not fiction, this is documented. They took their photographs together. The Mufti is our kind of Mullah Omar, they are the equivalent of Taliban these guys in the Afghanistan situation. The Mufti kept urging, even this week, he said you must undertake Jihad in Benghazi, “you have to go and attack Benghazi and conduct Jihad in Benghazi”. And, no one says anything, like sanctions, were imposed against the Head of our Parliament and yet no sanction was ever imposed against this Mufti, even though he actually advocated bloodshed and attacks.

So we have this weird phenomenon of the most sinister elements in our country, sinister in that they are not interested in the country because they took the money of the country and gave it to Syrian radical elements. And, you know ask yourself, where did ISIS get all the flashy new cars and equipment when they first rose with uniforms that matched and everything was clean and organized, big propaganda machines, where did the money for all this come from? And ... The money came from Libya. The logistical support came from Turkey that allowed to pass through easily. And, that actually gave medical care to their fighters and facilitated the passing of weaponry into Syria. So, we are asked to form a democracy with these guys. And when we object, and I think I was the most vocal objector to all this, we get accused of being not interested in democracy enough, not being democratic, and not being inclusive.

I was in Algeria last week and I told the Algerian officials: I find it strange that when you do the dialogue sessions, I see at the table five Islamists. One of whom has only two members in his party. And I see that entire tribes of Libya like the Tarhuna who are about 600,000 people or the Warshafana who are about half a million people, or the Wirfalla who are about 700,000 people completely absent and unrepresented. Why? Because they don’t go along with the UN contention that we must have this so called inclusive process. This false inclusivity has led to the infiltration of the Libyan State.

Despite all the chaos that you see in Libya today, certain stable points never changed since 2011. Most importantly the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, the head of the financial controlling ministry or authority, and the deputy head of the defense ministry, the deputy head of the interior ministry; they never changed throughout these years. And they always stayed with the Muslim Brotherhood, the always stayed with the LIFG. How can the state rise when the very joints of the country, the state, the nation are actually held by people who don’t believe in the nation state? So I believe in the inclusivity that sets certain conditions about being included. To be included, you must not exclude others unfairly and to be included you must be a citizen in the sense of being someone who is interested in the rise of the country.

Therefore, having not been heard for in 2013, 2014, and 2015, I am hoping that the change that you just had in this country may open the way to perhaps a reconsideration of

your policies. A friend of mine asked, what would you ask America to do for you? I said we don't want anything from them. We don't want your soldiers to fight our fight, we don't want your money; Libya is rich enough. We don't want you to actually help us in any way. All we want you is to just relook at your policy. This crazy policy which undermines your own interest of actually supporting Muslim Brotherhood and LIFG elements who are not only undermining Libya but because they are undermining and destabilizing my country are a threat to your country.

The Libyan people want dignity like all other people. The Libyan people want to live freely, to live happily, to enjoy the wealth of their country equally. That's what Libyans want and that's what Libyans didn't get. And forgive me but part of the reason they didn't get that was every time we tried to push the Islamists back, somehow we were forced to let them be active by the international community itself.

So I am hoping that this foundation which is so key and which has the capacity to articulate and has the connectivity to get a listening from the new administration, I think it is time to revamp your Libya policy big time. And experts who are experienced deeply with the situation of the past like Pete can actually contribute to this a great deal. And there are some people here in Washington who know what's going on. We need someone to hold the Libya file because not only are the Europeans confused about certain points but they are having elections and these elections will lead to confusion and instability in their own policies for the foreseeable future. The Italians have theirs, the French have theirs, and the British just had a change. So it is extremely important that America has a leading role in all this, but it has to be a role based on a reconsideration of what's going on.

This is very painful for me and perhaps some of my difficulty in speaking today is because of the pain I actually feel. I remember that in 2011 I walked into Ambassador Steven's office and I was walking to see him I was the head of the stabilization team at the time in the Tibesti Hotel he had his embassy in the same hotel I was staying in. And as I walked in, I saw these Islamist leader sitting in the waiting area. So I went in, I said Ambassador before we discuss anything may I warn you that the very guys sitting in your waiting area are a threat to you. He said no these are part of the "katibas" we are using for protection of the embassy. Now the Benghazi disaster, its real reason is precisely this policy of trusting the Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG. And your ambassador was killed by these people, not by anyone else. Many Americans don't know this but young women and men of Benghazi went out to demonstrate on what was called the Benghazi Friday. They went out to demonstrate and they actually physically pushed the militia out of Benghazi without weapons. They lost a good number of people but they actually pushed them in massive demonstrations against the killers of the ambassador. Guess what happened after that. The leadership of Libya the Islamist leadership of Libya showed up in Benghazi on a platform. The photo is there with the militia leaders. They said that it was wrong to push these militias out because they are legitimate and your administration at the time failed to say no these young people represent what America stands for, they are Jeffersonian, they follow Lincoln in their aspirations and you guys are the ones who killed our ambassador. No one held them accountable at the time and they got away with it. It was that abandonment of the aspirations of the Libyan Revolution that has led to all the disasters that we have seen.

Today as I talk to you, the only source of income of the Libyan people has been attacked by what is called Saraya Benghazi, or the Benghazi Defence Brigades. This is headed by Manqool Sharkasi in total alliance with al-Qaeda's Ismail Sallabi and his affiliates and

with the Islamist, the Muslim Brotherhood militias of what is called the Drooa (shields) of Wissam bin Hmeid and others. And this is the most painful part having been inspected in a troop inspection by Mahdi al-Barghathi who is the defense minister of the government of national accord of the presidential council recognized by the United States of America and by the UN. And whenever we want to change this Presidential Council and I will readily admit I am trying to replace the presidential council. And I am one of the contenders for this post. When we tried to change the presidential council we were told no no no you have to really be patient and you have to be inclusive and as we are being patient and inclusive these guys are attacking the oil terminals and attacking Benghazi.

They tried three times to attack Benghazi and thank God for the airpower of the Libyan National Army who have been fighting terrorists for three years without any international support, as a matter of fact with international undermining. And they have pushed back the Islamist out of Benghazi in a dreadful three year-fight that has cost us something like 6,000 young people, and yet no one is helping the Libyan National Army and they are standing by as an al-Qaeda army is being blessed by the UN and the US into attacking the east.

There was a good statement yesterday that called for the cessation of hostilities but the way the statement is written it actually equates the Libyan national army with Qaeda troops. So the policy is still there because the new administration hasn't had the chance to revamp all the policies and to change the various embassy staff so and so. We are still going on the previous administrations policy I came to Washington to urge you to quickly relook at what you are doing to us because you are not only not helping the army you are actually undermining our attempt to replace the presidential council by simply following the blind policy of saying that this is the legitimate government of Libya.

Another very key area is the Central Bank of Libya. I tried a dozen times submitting evidence that the Central Bank Governor and some of his staff are actually facilitating the army of Islamist Militias by giving them trade finance. Today, if the Central Bank gives you 10 million dollars you can go out in the black market and make them 70 million dinars; the official rate is supposed to be 1 to 1 the black market rate is 1 to 7. So you can imagine by opening trade finance to chosen Islamist companies you can finance everything and we are being killed by our own money because of the Central Bank Governor.

I complained to the previous administration and documented this issue several times and not only did they not do anything about it, but they also said you should not undermine the Governor because there is a what they call the derisking process that could shut the banking system down. But what more risking can there be than to have an Islamist facilitating governor? This governor was fired by the legitimate Parliament in the East two years ago. We haven't been allowed to implement the removal of the governor because his signature is the only signature recognized by your financial system, because as you know we trade in dollars so everything has to be recognized in New York.

So if I am to be asked what we need from the US it's just to wake up to what's been happening? You have been advocating Muslim Brotherhood and LIFG for the last six years and you are still expecting us to rise as a nation. That is like saying to the Germans allow the Nazi party, give the Central Bank to them but you must have German democracy. It just doesn't work so please reconsider the policy, please urgently appoint a Special Envoy to Libya that can hold this file, please stay as leaders of the file don't give it to any of the regional or European powers because they are all going through their own instabilities and we need a clear defense of Jeffersonian democracy in Libya. So the choice

is not either a Gaddafi type of rule or an Islamist rule but a third choice for which I went out in the streets in 2011 and so did many young people—that is the choice of liberty and the pursuit of happiness that is what we want, and I think such a third choice does exist and there are enough young people women and men were working with the tribes, the social fabric of Libya. They all want this. We are working with women groups and held several conferences organized by the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS) and that is what we hear from them we hear the same things from youth, be they city youth or village or tribal youth, and we have a group of elders and woman leaders coming to the UN to explain just that next week.

And you need to look again at the policy that you have been pursuing. I am sorry due to the time restriction there's so much to cover but these are the basic things I wanted to say and I would be more than happy to document for you any of the claims that I have made.

AREF ALI NAYED

Dr. Aref Ali Nayed is Chairman of Kalam Research & Media (KRM) and Chairman of the Libya Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS) and the Former Ambassador of Libya to the United Arab Emirates. During the Libyan revolution he was the Chief Operations Manager of the Libya Stabilization Team. He also lectures on Islamic Theology, Logic, and Spirituality at the restored Uthman Pasha Madrasa in Tripoli, Libya and at the Fatih Sultan Mehmet University in Istanbul, Turkey. He is Senior Advisor to the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme; Fellow of the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute in Jordan; Adjunct Professor at Faith Sultan Mehmet University in Istanbul; and he was also recently appointed to the Board of Advisors of the Templeton Foundation. He was Professor at the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Rome), and the International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilization (Malaysia). He has headed an Information Technology company. He received his BSc in Engineering, MA in the Philosophy of Science, and a Ph.D. in Hermeneutics from the University of Guelph (Canada). He also studied at the University of Toronto and the Pontifical Gregorian University. He has been involved in various Inter-Faith initiatives since 1987, including the seminal “A Common Word” process. Dr Nayed launched this year a new movement for change in Libya under the name “Ihya Libya” (Reviving Libya) aiming to create a stable, prosperous and democratic country. His published works include *Russian Engagements: On Libyan Politics and Libyan-Russian Relations* (2019); *Radical Engagements: Essays on Religion, Extremism, Politics, and Libya* (2017); *Vatican Engagements: A Muslim Theologian’s Journey in Muslim-Catholic Dialogue* (2016); “ISIS in Libya: Winning the Propaganda War” (2015); “Overcoming ISIS Libya: A Disaster Recovery Plan (2015); “Libya: From Revolutionary Legitimacy to Constitutional Legitimacy” (2014); and “Beyond Fascism” (2013).

