

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS

20TH ANNUAL ARAB-U.S. POLICYMAKERS CONFERENCE

“Dynamics of Recent Events in the Arab World: Framing the Arab and U.S. Responses”

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2011

RONALD REAGAN BUILDING & INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Geopolitical Dynamics: Arab North Africa (The Maghreb) / Syria / Yemen

Chair:

Ms. Jennifer Salan - Senior Producer, *The Stream*, Al Jazeera English

Speakers:

Dr. Nejjib Ayachi - Founder and President, Maghreb Center (Tunisia)

Dr. Michele Dunne - Director, Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East; former Member, White House National Security Council Staff and the Department of State's Policy Planning Staff, as well as Bureau of Intelligence and Research and service as a Diplomat in Cairo and Jerusalem (Egypt)

Mr. Christopher Blanchard - Middle East Policy Analyst, Congressional Research Service (Syria/Yemen)

Ms. Randa Fahmy Hudome - President, Fahmy Hudome International; former Associate Deputy Secretary of Energy; Member, Board of Directors, National Council on US-Arab Relations (Libya)

Dr. Esam Omiesh - Director of the Libyan Emergency Task Force and Political Director of the Libyan Council of North America. Libyan Embassy liaison to the Libyan American community. (Libya)

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Remarks as delivered

[Ms. Jennifer Salan] Good afternoon everyone thanks for sticking with us. I heard it's been a great day so far, and I'm sorry for keeping you so late, but very delighted to be here. My bio is not in the book, so I will just give you a little bit about me.

My name is Jennifer Salan. I am a senior producer at Al Jazeera, English. Up until recently I was the producer on the "Riz Khan Show." I think many of you are probably familiar with him and I have just recently joined a new show on the network called "The Stream," which is based around social media. We get our stories from Facebook, Twitter, so this has obviously been a big year for us with the Arab uprisings and everything else going on in the world, Occupy Wall Street, this has been an exciting time to be working on a show that brings that in.

Before we start I just want to say that this today is a bit of a homecoming for me and I am delighted to be here. I consider myself to be part of the work of the National Council and Dr Anthony's work over all these many years. At Al Jazeera I have done something that I am very privileged to do, something that I love and is my passion, and I got this passion from the Model Arab League Program. It was because of that program that I have had the career I have and I have been able to work on, originally U.S. Arab relations, and now in journalism where I spent a lot of my time focusing on the region. So for those of you who have always supported this work I just want to say thank you personally and I am so delighted to be here.

[Mr. Patrick Mancino] What Jennifer is not sharing with you is that she was born in Wichita Falls, Texas.

[Salan] Yes, from a very small town in Texas to Washington, D.C. and you know being all over the Arab world it's been a pleasure and I have the people that support this to thank. So thank you.

It's no secret to anyone that 2011 has been a remarkable year, one that I thought I would never see, following the region and the developments. I never thought I would see the kind of changes we have witnessed in the past few months. We saw two months ago. I'm just wondering what that's going to bring us and in the last week alone we have seen the death of Colonel Kaddafi, elections in Tunisia, carnage in Syria and Yemen continuing, and just this morning the UN security council voted unanimously to end the NATO operation in Libya. Tomorrow we are expecting more demonstrations in Cairo against the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, or SCAF. So anything could happen and I think we are all aware that this is a very exciting time to be watching the region, but it is also a very uncertain time.

So amidst the euphoria and backdrop of these very real changes I know the IMF is warning of an economic downturn in the countries of the Arab uprising. Egypt and Tunisia particularly are facing a sharp drop in growth that is going to be taking place well into next year. Egypt's Finance Minister has said that the panacea of subsidies has to stop and that

the government simply cannot maintain them with its current budget. But as many of us know, Egypt is a country of great poverty with many of its population on less or a little more than a dollar a day. These cuts are going to be very difficult to implement and Egypt is not alone. The uncertainty sparked by the uprisings on top of the global financial crisis has caused unemployment to climb and dried up investment.

Well between the political and economic questions it's the people who are caught in the middle of this. As a journalist this is what I am most interested in, the people stories. I know many of you are analysts of the region and are interested in what all this change is going to mean, not only for the people on the ground but for us and for people in other parts of the world. So its going to take some very astute leadership to maneuver these obstacles and one of the key questions we want to look at here today is who's going to be making those decisions? We are going to be having new governments in many of these countries and how are they going to be basing those decisions? On what are they going to be basing those decisions? And what will they mean for the political and economic future? Not only for the people of the region but for those of us that care so much about them and want to be involved with them in this change.

So today we have a very distinguished panel to answer these questions and many more that I am sure you might have.

Dr. Nejib Ayachi is of Tunisian descent and is the founder and President of the Maghreb Center, a non profit, 501C3 organization, focusing on creating bridges of understanding between the US and the Maghreb as well as educating the public about the concerns of the region. The Maghreb Center is made up of US scholars and development experts who work with their regional counterparts to find creative solutions to the changing needs of Maghreb communities. Dr. Ayachi is a frequent lecturer on North African issues and has taught at George Washington University, at the State Department's Foreign Services Institute. He holds a doctorate in political science from the Sorbonne.

Here today to tackle Syria and Yemen for us is a face that I know is familiar to many of you from previous conferences, Mr. Christopher Blanchard. He is a Middle East policy analyst at the Congressional Research Service, the policy research arm of the United States Congress and as most of you know the CRS puts out in-depth non biased reports which is difficult in Washington but Americas elected leaders rely on for so many of the critical decisions they make, or at least we hope they do.

Tackling Libya for us today, because there are so many changes we are lucky to have two distinguished guests. Randa Fahmy Hudome is an internationally recognized expert in the Middle East and North African affairs with particular focus on Egypt Libya and Tunisia. In 2003 she launched Fahmy Hudome International a strategic consulting firm providing critical advice and counsel for Fortune 500 companies, governments media organizations and private sector entities with interest in the Middle East and North Africa. Previously she was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the Associate Deputy Secretary of Energy. From 1995 to 2001 she served as counselor to Senator Spencer Abraham of Michigan where she was credited with shaping many pieces of legislation that affected US

interests aboard including financial assistance to US allies in the Middle East. Ms Fahmy Hudome received her Jurist Doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center.

Also joining us to discuss Libya is Dr. Esam Omiesh. He is Director of the Libyan Emergency Task Force and political director of the Libyan Council of North America. He was recently appointed as the Libyan Embassy liaison to the Libyan American community. Dr Omiesh is a graduate of Georgetown University where he earned degrees in international relations and biology. A physician and the chief of general surgery division of Inova Alexandria hospital, Dr Omiesh has just returned from a three-week medical mission to the western mountains of Libya where he was also able to visit a newly liberated Tripoli.

Dr. Michelle Dunne will be joining us shortly, for those of you who are not familiar, she is the Director of the Atlantic Councils Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, she served in the White House on the National Security Council staff, on the State Department Policy Planning Staff and in its Bureau of Intelligence and Research and as a diplomat in Cairo and Jerusalem. She co chairs the working group on Egypt a bipartisan group of experts established in February to mobilize US government attention to the forces of change in that country. Dr. Dunne received her Ph.D. in Arabic language and linguistics from Georgetown University and I think we are going to start, where everything started, in Tunisia with Dr. Nejjib Ayachi.

[Dr. Nejjib Ayachi] Thank you very much. It's really an honor to speak, to talk about Tunisia and its quite a challenge because everything started there. By everything I mean the revolution, the Arab Spring. I understand I have eight to nine minutes so I have been told that I should provide the audience with a few facts about Tunisia itself. Because it's little known in the United States. It's a small country of about ten or ten and a half million inhabitants, it's ethnically and religiously homogeneous unlike other neighboring countries. This is not a tribal society. It is not ethnically divided. This is to answer someone from the audience that asked me that question a few times early on.

Tunisia benefits from, we can say that Tunisia is what we call a nation state, the process of building a state in Tunisia started in the 19th century by the various rulers and reformers. There is in Tunisia a state of government that, even during the revolution that functioned, that worked, that delivered services and so on. Tunisians are all Sunni Muslims of the Malachite rite. [Arabic] in Arabic, with a small Jewish community which has been there for centuries.

After independence from France, Tunisia was French protectorate from 1881 to 1956, it became a republic. Previously it was ruled by a bayh, a monarch, independent but formally under Ottoman suzerainty. The first President of the Republic of Tunisia was Habib Bourguiba, the father of modern Tunisia, was fiercely secular and he adopted the French version of secularism called "[French]" which is much perceived as quite excessive. This excessive secularism is considered as having contributed to the emergence of the Islamist movement in Tunisia incidentally in the '80s.

It's the same kind of secularism that inspired Kemal Ataturk in Turkey. Bourguiba was an enlightened autocrat who remained close to the West throughout his career and instituted a one party political system, invested heavily in education and promoted women's rights. Women currently, thanks to Bourguiba, share practically equal rights with men, with the exception of inheritance but this is under discussion and it might not remain so in the foreseeable future. And he endeavored to modernize and develop Tunisia's economy, an effort that was pursued under Ben Ali who succeeded him through a bloodless coup for senility. Bourguiba was too old and Ben Ali was brought to deal with the growing challenges posed by the Islamists and Ben Ali took advantage of it to depose him and replace him. And he kept the modernizing work, efforts of Bourguiba, including the economy, so he kept modernizing the economy of some time. So Tunisia for many years for the past 10-15 years enjoyed something like 5% of economic growth despite limited resources.

This is not an oil producer country. There is a little bit of oil but not much. The economy is rather based on tourism, phosphates, agricultural products and light manufacturing. However the relative wealth that was generated by Tunisia's economy left behind large segments of the society especially in the hinterland of the country. While coastal areas benefitted much more from public and private investments, especially in the tourism sector. So the combination of economic development and widespread education contributed to the creation of a relatively large middle class in Tunisia. And also produced many college graduates that the economy eventually could not absorb. At least the economy the way economic development policy where the kind of economic development policy that were chosen were not able to provide enough jobs for all the young people, especially those who are not well connected, basically who live in the hinterland, and there are quite a few of them. But they also have an education...

Ben Ali ruled Tunisia for 23 years until recently and he relied on, I think it's a well known fact now even by those who don't know much about Tunisia, he instituted a police state. Tunisia was truly the example of a police state. He cracked down on all opposition, Islamists and secular, but despite the heavy-handed crackdown by his security apparatus he kept he was consistently challenged. His grip on power was consistently challenged by human rights groups, by the union and women's groups.

So the... his regime became increasingly corrupt with time until ... so the combination of I think the economy the impact of the worldwide economic crisis that increased the number of unemployed youth, the fact that he himself became more and more corrupt, more and more authoritarian, this has triggered an uprising on the part of young unemployed people in the hinterland primarily. But soon they were joined by other young people from the coastal areas, from the and the union supported them, and eventually the middle class took it to the streets, and they demonstrated against Ben Ali asking him to leave. Telling him that they have had it with his 23 years of autocracy. With the pressure, from that kind of pressure indeed pushed him to leave Tunisia and he found refuge in Saudi Arabia. He was granted asylum there on January 15th of 2011.

What happened after that the if you are interested in knowing how we went a caretaker government was asked to run Tunisia, to administer Tunisia because the constitution says that when the President cannot work effectively, when he is unable to perform his duties, the Speaker of the Parliament should step in and take over, which happened and he nominated a Prime Minister. He kept the former Prime Minister, Ben Ali's Prime Minister the first transition government was composed of members of the previous cabinet. This didn't work. There was tremendous pressure from the street, from the young people's movement who started the revolution from the point they had to come out and designate new position in government. This one composed of technocrats and independent personalities and some members of the opposition in Tunisia. And they ran the government for some ten months until recently and they organized elections for the constituent assembly. The elections took place last Sunday. I am sure you have heard the Islamists were the, the Ennahda Party, the name of Islamist party in Tunisia, won a majority of the seats in the Parliament.

Immediately followed by three to four secular, three center left-center right secular parties, so Ennahda has the majority of the votes, of the seats but not the absolute majority. Therefore they cannot govern alone. They have to work within a coalition. They have to bring about a coalition so that they can govern, until new elections in a year or so, until or well after drafting a new constitution and calling for new elections parliamentary and presidential elections in more or less a year from now.

So this is where we are today. I anticipate questions about the Ennahda. Who are they? How did they get there? We can talk about that later maybe a little more, but I can tell you they have been around for some time. They are deeply rooted in Tunisian society as a matter of fact. They have been around for some time. Ben Ali, Bourguiba cracked down on them but Ben Ali's crackdown was very harsh. They were arrested by the thousands. They were tortured. They were put in jail, many of them went into exile.

So why did they Tunisians vote for them? Well they this kind of sympathy that they benefitted from because they went through all this harshness. They were also reassuring. They did not they don't want to install a Caliphate in Tunisia. They don't want to install an Islamist state. They don't want to role back women's rights, but they are reassuring. Tunisians like many people in the Middle East, the Arab world, Muslim world are religious becoming more and more religious. The Islamists also appeal to false piety and populous politics. They do that elsewhere and they do that in Tunisia. And that has paid off. They appeared to be different from the previous political elite, the other political elite, maybe less corrupt. That very, very broadly is the appeal of Ennahda, where they come from.

[Salan] Excellent, thank you.

Christopher Blanchard.

[Mr. Christopher Blanchard] Thank you everyone. A special thanks to Dr. Anthony and the Board of the National Council for inviting me back to this years conference, its my pleasure to be here again.

My remarks and answers today will be in my personal capacity and do not reflect the Library of Congress or the Congressional Research Service. Time is short and our organizers have asked me to cover events both in Syria and Yemen, two of the most complex uprisings to emerge in the last year. I think there may be a door prize waiting for me, but in all seriousness the task at hand here pales in comparison to what the people of those two countries are facing and the threats to their daily security.

These countries present a long-term policy challenges and created sharp debates prior to the events of the last ten months and now both appear to be teetering on the brink of a broader conflict. In order to address these complexities within a short amount of time, I will briefly identify some key actors, summarize current positions and recent events, and discuss a few core challenges and options for each.

In Syria as you know the government of Bashar Assad and the Syrian military and security forces continue to confront a broad national protest movement demanding first an end to the violence and broad security crackdown the government is perpetrating. The opposition remains divided in its demands with regard to dialogue, political reform and regime change although it is united in its calls mostly for President Assad to step down. Again President Assad and his supporters are all but intransigent in the face of those calls and about immediate opening of dialogue. They are accusing the opposition of increasingly using terrorist tactics and armed force and also being agents of foreign agendas. Things that we heard in other conflicts, Libya in particular.

In recent weeks the government has renewed efforts to coordinate mass demonstrations to show support for itself, an attempt to show strength. But overall we see a shift away from the mixed approach that the regime took early in 2011 toward a confrontational approach towards protestors responding to defections from military forces with force, and directly targeting prominent activists that are identifying themselves with emerging opposition coalitions.

Across Syria this week opposition activists have supported a call for a general strike, but overall opinions appear to be darkening for prospects of dialogue and a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Local coordination councils remain active in many areas, and constitute an informal network for the opposition, however as I mentioned today a nationally coordinated and unified opposition has not fully emerged. Rather two coalition groups one based in Syria and the other operating mainly in neighboring Turkey are seeking to shape the political agenda of the opposition.

The Syrian National Council emerged informally in August then formally in October in Turkey and brings together a range of external activists along with representatives of the Damascus Declaration Forces, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and the Syrian Revolution General Commission. They've distinguished themselves most recently by calling for the immediate protection of Syrian civilians which many inside Syria and internationally are interpreting as calls for a more forceful intervention if not military intervention.

They also have a strong belief that dialogue with the Assad government is not possible or likely to be fruitful. The National Coordination Commission for the Forces of Democratic Change is the internal coordination body for the Syrian opposition. They consist mainly of leftist groups, Kurdish activists and organizers who are associated with the issuance of the 2005 Damascus Declaration. They've distinguished themselves most recently in their categorical opposition of external military intervention, and for maintaining the prospect of dialogue with the regime, of course, following an end to the use of force against civilians.

As I mentioned reports increasingly suggest that dissident military personnel and officers acting under the organization of what they are referring to as the Free Syrian Army, or the Free Officers Movement are actively targeting government security personnel with small arms, grenades, rocket propelled grenades and other low level attacks. These forces, active forces are rumored to number several hundred but precise verifiable estimates are not available and reports about larger numbers of defections from military units are widespread. In fact thousands of military personnel may have defected during the uprising thus far.

As is obvious the United States, the Arab League, Turkey, Iran, Russia, the European Union and China are the key external actors in the crisis. The joint veto of the proposed United Nations Security Council resolution on Syria signaled important divisions among these parties particularly within the permanent five members of the Security Council. More recently Arab League engagement with President Assad and his government has resumed in hope of achieving a cease-fire and opening a national dialogue, and as I indicated Syrian opposition groups remain split on the question.

In the interest of giving due time for Yemen I will save challenges and options in Syria for discussion there will likely be questions about that.

In Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh's return to the country has coincided with a sharpening of the confrontation there between his government and security forces controlled by his family and loose alliance of political rivals on the other side including the Al Akmar [phonetic] family, General Ali Mousin [phonetic] and his first armored division and the opposition joint meeting parties coalition.

The struggle between these two factions is now overshadowing the popular opposition movement that emerged early in the year and that was rooted in a new wave of youth activism, inspired by regional developments and a corresponding reinvigoration of established opposition groups. On the periphery, Yemen's three persistent civil conflicts continue to complicate matters further. They threaten the unity of the state and they are creating arenas for political rivals both internal and external to seek advantages.

In Yemen's north, supporters of the Al-Houthi movement in recent months have clashed with opposition supporters from the Aslaf party and tribal pro-government tribal elements in Al Jawf province. In the South, southern independence activists have declared solidarity with northern protestors but have also increased their organization and activities with mass-protests that were in the news this week, only the most recent example of that. In the

Governate of Abyan hundreds of Islamist militants many of whom identify or are affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or its sort of new on the ground format organization called Ansar Al Sharia. They've attempted to seize control of the Wadi-Bannah region, which includes the towns of Jahr [phonetic] and Zinzhibar [phonetic] tying down members of several Yemeni army brigades numbering in the thousands. Those army brigades have been all but abandoned by the central government and have faced difficulty in combating a smaller number of Al-Qaeda affiliates.

In light of increased fighting and shelling in civilian areas in the capital and other cities recently, calls for an immediate resolution of Yemen's conflict have increased. This is evident in the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2014, which calls among other things for a settlement agreement on the basis of the GCC agreement negotiated in the spring of 2011.

At present, President Saleh once again stated his willingness to sign the GCC agreement, something he's reneged on several times thus far this year. While some reports are now suggesting that he has submitted a series of amendments designed to postpone his resignation until the election of a new president, conditions that would be all but unacceptable to the Yemeni opposition groups that have emerged.

The United States is now calling for an immediate transfer of power, in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution and the GCC plan. Overall, the situation in Yemen is characterized by a sort of familiar story. It's a balance between short-term needs of external powers versus the long-term risks of state collapse and failure. The difficulty at present is that Yemen's persistent zero-sum political conflict between the two main political factions in North Yemen is now preventing any resolution either of the short-term needs and is actually exacerbating the likelihood that the international community and the Yemeni people will face the worst of the long-term risks.

Thank you.

[Salan] Randa.

[Ms. Randa Fahmy Hudome] Thank you. I'd like to address the relationship with Libya and particularly the United States relationship with Libya from a historical perspective and then Dr. Omiesh is going to pick it up, I think, during the revolutionary period because he's been on the ground there recently and has some terrific real time information. In the interest of transparency, my role in Libya actually comes from my professional experience there. As Jenny mentioned, I served in the Bush Administration from 2001-2003 and so I saw some of the inside mechanics about how the rapprochement came about with Libya.]

But after I left the Bush administration, I was actually employed by the government of Libya to help them solidify the relationship with the United States and actually come out of the cold and come back into the international community. After I completed that task, I then took on the task of representing international companies in Libya. So today I'd like to talk a little bit about the historic relationship and how we got to where we are today, and

also about some of the concerns that businesses may have in Libya, pre and post the revolution.

So historically, without going through too much history, I think we all know through the 1980s and the 1990s, the Libyan-United States was one of a pariah relationship. Libya certainly having taken on through its leadership acts of terrorism throughout the world, but in particular, there were many cases of terrorism that affected U.S. citizens including many of you may remember of course Pan-Am 103, they blew up UTA, Egypt Air. They also had a hand in the La Belle discotheque bombing, along with other international acts of terrorism, of course then causing both the United Nations, as an international body, and the United States to impose sanctions. Of course the UN sanctions were multi-lateral. The US sanctions were bilateral.

We then moved into a period of what I call thawing. And this was, you know, you have to harken back into your memory. This was post-9/11. The United States was in a totally different mindset when it came to its strategic relationships in the Middle East. We were hell-bent on catching Al-Qaeda and destroying them, and anyone in the region who would cooperate with us, was, in essence, valuable. And Libya fell into that category.

Many people do not realize that Gaddafi actually stepped forward rather quickly after 9/11 and offered his cooperation because he was very good at pushing down Al Qaeda, particularly in Libya, because simply and purely, they were competition to his power. In that period from 2001-2003, the British were actually heavily negotiating with the Libyans on a variety of issues, but in particular, trying to bring them back into the international community, which the Libyans pretty much wanted. It was only in this context of negotiations that, in the end, the British brought the Americans in because at some point, the Libyans were ready to put forth a compensation package for some of their terrorist acts, including Pan Am 103, but also in the context of these negotiations, they had offered to give up their WMDs. Now some people will say it was because of Iraq. Harken back, we invaded Iraq in the spring of 2003, under the auspices that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass-destruction. Some say Gaddafi didn't want to be next. Whatever the case was, it was in those negotiations that the Libyans voluntarily came forward and gave up the WMDs. It was in the Fall of 2003 and it was Bush Administration diplomats who negotiated that deal.

Now the often talked about deal is talked about in the terms of WMD relinquishment. What really happened was that the Libyans said we're going to give up our WMDs, but, the United States, you cannot push for regime change. And we made that deal. The United States made that deal. Did we know that Gaddafi violated people's human rights and was bad to his people? Absolutely. But when you look at what our strategic importance and priorities were, our priorities were to rid rogue nations of weapons of mass destruction and we cut that deal.

Now somewhere in that period of thawing, moving into rapprochement there was what I call a period of lost-in-translation. So in those negotiations, the Libyans believed that as a result of giving up their WMDs, they would all of a sudden be accepted by the international

community, and that some how, magically, they would be taken off the U.S. list of terrorist countries. In fact, we did remove those WMDs from Libya, and they were, they had the WMDs, in fact they were put on display at the Department of Energy's facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee for all to see. And this is what I start to think was the beginning of the problematic relationship. And I like to describe the relationship as a cold marriage between a husband and wife who only stay together for the sake of the kids.

We then moved into what was called the "moving the goalpost period," which went from 2004-2006, and I worked intently on this. The Libyans thought that they should be removed from the terrorism list. They were doing everything the United States wanted them to do. They were cooperating on 9/11. They were cooperating on intelligence matters. In fact, we had some flights going directly from Guantanamo to Tripoli and you can decide what it was that was going on there. And so they were also cooperating when it came to Al-Qaeda and stomping out Al-Qaeda in North Africa, in the region. So the Libyans really didn't understand why they were not being taken off the terrorism list, and I call this the "moving of the goalpost period" because when I would go and meet with administration officials and say, "Okay, tell me why Libya's not coming off the list," they would give me five reasons. And they would go something like this: Well, first, they're not cooperating enough in Iraq. They're causing us problems in the Palestinian territory. They tried to assassinate then Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. And then when the Saudis forgave the Libyans, you kind of would think that would have fallen off the list. And what happened was that list of five kept changing, and then something else would get inserted, and then something else would be pulled back. And so the Libyans became very frustrated by this process. Mixed in with that, of course, was the ongoing and continuing negotiations of many of the lawsuits and the financial compensations for Americans and their families who were killed in those terrorist acts.

We then moved into the last period, which was "off the list." So finally, in 2006, through a great deal of back and forth and disagreement within the Bush Administration itself, President Bush, through declaration of Secretary Condoleeza Rice, removed Libya from the terrorist list. From my perspective, and from most foreign policy watchers, it was a huge achievement. It was the first time a terrorist country had ever been removed from the terrorist list through diplomatic means.

Iraq was removed from the terrorist list. Why? Because we went to war with Iraq, and that's how we got them off the list, because we invaded Iraq. So it was a huge foreign policy achievement, but you rarely heard a Bush Administration official speak about it. It was not talked about as success. It was never discussed openly. And it was almost again, like this cold marriage, or in essence, a man who's hiding a secret girlfriend in the closet and doesn't want to bring her out.

So the Libyans' attitude was 'too little, too late.' The Americans were extremely uncomfortable with the relationship. Why? Because Gaddafi was still in power. Because we cut a deal, we allowed the regime to continue. And so what happened was we moved into a post-Bush period, into the Obama Administration where they in essence inherited the Bush administration policy. What to do, what to do? Similar "uncomfortableness."

And you saw it again, with the issues that raised itself, with the compensation for the families of Pan Am 103. You saw the embassies opened between two countries, but then you saw the release of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi and his hero's welcome back to Libya, complicating this relationship again. And then of course you saw the spectacular antics of Gaddafi at the United Nations, which embarrassed the Obama administration and put them in a very, very difficult position.

Flash forward into the revolutionary period, and Dr. Omiesh is going to cover this, but I look at some of the issues with respect to that period, even, the first and most important decision that was made relatively without disagreement was the NATO military action, which I think the United States took the right move at and stepped forward on that. And also the Arab League deserves a great deal of kudos for their actions, which were quite historic. But if you remember, there was also this difficult time period about recognition of the Transitional Council, and I remember thinking to myself, boy I don't miss those days, how frustrating it must have been for the Transitional Council to have to go through this again where the Obama Administration was dragging their feet on recognition.

There's also the issue, and it continues today, of the frozen assets, so you know, it's this difficult, difficult relationship, and my hope is in the future, and I hope in moving forward, this relationship becomes more of a warm marriage, if you will, because the husband and wife go to marriage counseling.

As far as the future outlook goes, I want to touch upon three different sectors: energy, defense, and business. What I foresee, and I worked a lot in the oil and gas sector, I foresee a very bright future. Frankly, when I was at the Department of Energy, our intelligence on the Libyan energy supply was not very good. We really didn't know what they had. From there until now, they're certainly, they were up to about 1.6 million barrels a day. I predict that they will get back up to that fairly quickly, more quickly than most analysts predict. And the reason why is the Libyans have always run their national oil company quite well. Also there's been very minimal damage to the infrastructure there, and they were very, very good at up and running when the revolution broke out, and as you heard earlier today, I think there's a bright future there. I know the Libyans were extremely interested in solar, nuclear, water desalinization, so I think there will be a bright future there as well.

I'm going to make a little prediction for all of you folks who are in the defense industry, and this is based upon some knowledge that I have from previous occurrences. I know that Africom, which many of you know is the joint-command for Africa, is looking for a new home. Over the years, Africom actually visited Tripoli twice to take a look at the geo-political location of Tripoli. It's extraordinary when you think about it and look at it in a map. But there was a great deal of hesitation as you can imagine by the Libyan government to welcome in the US military, particularly after the history, frankly, in Iraq, and again, harkening back to the cold marriage that the two countries had.

Along with these visits, and the search for a new home by Africom and a strategic location, of course we have the old air force base, Wheelus Air Force Base, which actually, you know,

is still there. It still has its golf course on it. But that could be revived easily. And I do think that, keep your eye out for that. I think that that would be productive for the military to take another look at Libya, particularly in light of the Libyans' appreciation of NATO action in Libya during the revolution and the US's extraordinary role within NATO.

And last but not least, on the business end, for those companies that tried to do business prior to the revolution, there were difficulties and these difficulties still remain. And I would certainly want to see the Libyans do something to help develop a more transparent business environment that includes who do to business with, to actually be respectful of many of the laws in the United States that are required for companies to do business in a foreign country, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. The questions of who will sign a contract? Who will actually pay for that contract? What government official has the authority to move forward on these contracts? And of course the all-encompassing transparency and rule of law. But as I mention, I am very hopeful for the future, and certainly looking forward to Dr. Omiesh's comments on what's going on, on the ground right now. Thank you.

[Salan] Before Dr. Omiesh starts, I'd just like to remind everyone you can write your questions down on those wonderful note cards and we can take them up here. People are going around to collect them, so if you have your questions, you can just jot them down and we can get them to our panelists.

Dr. Omiesh.

[Dr. Esam Omeish] Thanks, Randa, for a wonderful beginning. I'd like to, in fact, take Randa's lead in moving on the discussion and certainly what happened in Libya in the past eight months is nothing short of historic and one that has come at the heel of many other significant developments in the region. Nonetheless, the Libyan experiment in and of itself was quite tremendous, and for Libyans as well as for the world watching, it has culminated into an experiment that has every reason to be successful and much to be looking forward in the future, while at the same time facing a great deal of challenges.

This is a time when the international community has come together. The leadership of the U.S. was certainly evident in the beginning and certainly very palpable throughout the whole ordeal. The Arab League has played a central role in driving the process and of course the UN has been the place where all of this action has come together and synthesized towards what we saw.

Along with it, we saw the unique role that certain nations have played, certainly our partners in the Arab world as well as nations in Europe and the likes, and then, with all this, you saw a whole population, a whole people, rise and while they attempted everything to do peacefully at the beginning, they were brave enough to face the bullets and the armament that was directed against them, eventually having been forced to take it on and certainly rose to the challenge to be able to defeat Gaddafi's militias and be able to affect the real change on the ground. So many factors came in together in this historic revolution, if you may, and these events. And so the challenges are vast, and what we construct of what

is happening in Libya as we want to move forward certainly from a geopolitical perspective or a strategic perspective, as we want to ensure the security of the region and ensure the success, the continued success, of the Arab Spring, as well as look at strategic goals there and be able to safeguard them and build the partnerships that will allow the U.S. and its partners around the world to help the Libyan experiment move forward.

I think one of the things that we can look at currently is what are the priorities of Libyans that have come thus far. Certainly, the death of Gaddafi, albeit brutal and graphic in many ways, has brought some closure to the agony and to the struggle of the Libyan people, and has allowed them a sense of relief, if you may, and closure that allows them to face the future and say what is coming next. And it's very important for us as international players or as folks in the US and from a Libyan-American perspective to look at what is it that poses the major challenges for this experiment to continue to succeed if we all agree that it has many ingredients that make it likely to succeed.

I just wanted to highlight these because these will take on a life of their own in terms of what is it we can do, what is it we can bring forth in that dynamic, to be able to see success and continued progress in that region. Certainly the unity of the nation has been in question, and unifying the country, and being able to forge structures that will allow for that unity to be sustained is something that's been very critical. And I think for those who have studied Libya across history and during the current events recognize that there are some issues that may, some fault lines that may lead to some disunity, but the fact of the matter is that despite the challenge of this revolution and the after effect, I think we can look at these factors, we need to understand them in how they will affect the dynamic that will come afterward, but I don't think that the unity of the nation is in peril.

The other challenge that is, I think, more timely and more important is how to govern and how to move on with the government structure. The TNC, although has been a very effective body in unifying the Libyan people around it and in being able to forge pathways with the international community and allow for the events that took place to coalesce into a focus on the best for Libya, they themselves have struggles within themselves, and their ability to remain effective and in their ability to handle the challenges that are thrown at them. Their declaration currently to call for a national congress, which is an expansion of the current membership to be able to be inclusive of as many of the areas of Libya is something that we need to watch very closely and really allow for its success in whichever way we can. Of course that's ultimately up to them, but that's very important because that's the body that will be able to bring forth the interim government that will be the caretaker, and it's the same body that will be commissioned to produce the committee on the constitution that will draft and hopefully forge the next phase for Libya.

They have expressed their constant commitment to the very principles that we want to see in Libya: the rule of law, human rights, inclusion, the rights of minorities and women, and on and on and on. And I think their genuine commitment to that is palpable as well, and I don't think we need to be concerned about it. I think we need to be concerned about is making sure that that process, giving them enough support to be able to see it happen

sooner than later because the longer that process goes, the more likely we will see potential side conflicts.

They have the challenge of security and consolidating the militaries and the militias, if you may, or what they call the [Arabic] or the revolutionaries. There's a lot of weapons on the ground. There's a lot of difficulties in bringing forth unity, although we see patterns that are helpful. We've seen militias that have handed over their weapons. We've seen folks that have come under central command, if you may, submitting to the defense department if you may, or the security apparatus that is being built by the TNC. Nonetheless, the fault lines in that dynamic is quite a bit, and I think that we, we can't leave that issue alone until we're assured that in fact consolidation is happening along with it, you know, getting rid of weapons and being able to sustain the support that they need to ensure that other elements of national security are being dealt with. You know, border security is an issue, the issue of decommissioning of weapons and the post-comeback military and army, building things that a nation will need. In addition to that, there is the issue of national reconciliation. Gaddafi has ruled for a long time. And there is a lot of legacy, good or bad in many ways, mostly bad of course, that still haunts many Libyan people, and the blood that shed during the revolution and the challenges that come with this will actually require an effective and an immediate national reconciliation process that should be fairly swift, but should also highlight the need for justice when it comes to excesses and crimes that have been committed against people. Whereas maybe when it comes to a monetary compensation and issues that can relieve those conflicts quickly enough they can take strides and they need international support, they need international expertise in this.

And lastly, just the ability really just to help serve the population of Libya very quickly with a stable environment and with services and with a strategic eye on the development of the country. Libya is a very small country with vast resources and it could be a very successful experiment when it comes to ensuring its development and its moving forward. But you need to have the institutions, you need to have that are capable of doing that. You need the monitoring and the transparency and the ability to put in place many of the structures that unfortunately Gaddafi has decimated over 42 years and has essentially made the country void of.

So those are challenges, those are priorities, but they themselves pose challenges. I think, looking at the greater scene while we can maintain a keen interest in Libya and have certain strategic goals in it. I think we need to be vested in seeing this to be a successful experiment and insh'Allah, God willing, we hope that that will take place. Thank you.

[Salan] Last we're going to hear from Dr. Michele Dunne. Thank you for joining us.

[Dr. Michele Dunne] Thanks very much. So I'm going to speak about Egypt, and it's late in the day, I'm not going to talk about the history of the US-Egyptian relationship. I assume you know about it, or about the Egyptian Revolution. I assume you've heard about that too.

So what I'm going to talk about is what's going on right now, and what I foresee going on over the next few months, because I really am very concerned about what's going on in

Egypt right now and the trajectory of the Egyptian transition. Egypt carried out kind of a half-revolution in February in which these very large popular protests did succeed in bringing down President Mubarak, but what the protestors did was turn over the keys to the Egyptian military, whom, as you know, are now in authority in the country, and say they are carrying out a democratic transition, and indeed, parliamentary elections are scheduled to begin, and I think they will begin, at the end of November. But the fact that the military is in control in Egypt lends a very different character to what's going on there, than for example Tunisia, where the military also sided with the protests and against the ruler, but then more or less stepped out of the picture and let civilians take over the transition, or in Libya, which of course became an armed rebellion.

So in Egypt, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the SCAF, says that it wants to turn over control back to civilian authorities, and I think this is true to some extent. But what they seem to be doing is they want to turn over legislative authority. Executive authority, they seem to want to hold on to longer. It's not really clear how long, but I think there are troubling signs that they want to hold onto it long enough to ensure that the Egyptian military will have, not only the role it had during the Mubarak era, but an enhanced political role, more control, than they had in the past. For that reason, they are putting off the scheduling of a presidential election. The SCAF has said that once both parliamentary elections and the presidential election are held, then they will completely turn over authority. But they have refused so far to schedule the presidential election. They're saying that first the parliamentary elections should be held and I won't go into all the details, but Egypt is going to have extraordinarily long and complicated parliamentary elections that are going to take place continuously from the end of November to the beginning of March. And then they will undertake the writing and passage of a new constitution, and according to the SCAF, at least, only after that would a presidential election be held.

Most of the political forces in Egypt, almost all of them at this point, are calling on the SCAF to schedule a presidential election. Schedule a date certain for a presidential election, maybe a month or two after all the parliamentary elections are completed, and before the writing of a constitution. So why does the military want to put off the presidential election? They keep floating in the press a number of different trial balloons, about what kind of military role they're looking for. Perhaps something written into the constitution that describes the military as the protector of the democratic order and gives them an implicit right to intervene in politics in the future. Perhaps some kind of national security council in which the elected president would then be not above, but part of a ruling body that would also include unelected military leaders. Perhaps freedom from civilian oversight. Perhaps freedom from parliamentary oversight of the military budget. Perhaps the fact that the elected president would not be able to appoint military leaders. They're also floating trial balloons about the acceptability of a military person, either someone who is currently a senior military officer or recently past-military officer being elected as the next president.

So it's not clear whether any of this is going to stick, but it seems quite obvious. I just came from a trip to Egypt a week ago. It was quite obvious to Egyptians that there was some sort of indirect process of negotiation going on here, where the military is trying to secure its future political role, not only its economic interests, which we all know are extensive, but

its future political role and that they were not willing to commit to, to actually set the date for a presidential election, the date by which they will have to turn over authority until this is worked out.

So why should we worry about this? Is this a problem? I would posit that it is a problem. First of all, it's certainly a problem if you're thinking that Egypt is in a democratic transition because if as we know in democracies, there is civilian oversight of the military and that elected civilians are over the military. Now everyone knows the Egyptian military is very powerful and it's going to be very powerful for a long time, but I would say that creation of another military president or creation of new formal political roles for the military will really encumber that process of eventual civilian oversight of the military, will make it much more difficult. I would also say that if the military does continue in authority, then there are a number of problems that we can see coming. And we can see some of them already emerging in the way the military has managed things since it has been in power. We've seen some very troubling sectarian protests, in which a good number of people have been killed. And this is clearly an issue that the military is not handling well. We've seen poor management of the economy, and there's, you know, if you speak to business people or economists in Egypt, they will tell you that until there is a clear political timetable and a reestablishment of the rule of law and so forth and settling down of the security situation, the economy is not going to improve.

We've seen a very bad security environment in Egypt and a very poor handling of the need for police reform. There've been very big police demonstrations in the last few days in Egypt. So there are a number of problems that we can see coming. And I guess I'll just leave you with a provocative question. Do we want to see Pakistan on the Nile? It's, I think, something to think about and it leaves the United States with some difficult choices. We have a close relationship with the Egyptian military. You know, the US can say, at this point, well, what can we really do? How much influence do we really have? But Egyptians look at the tens of billions that we have given the Egyptian military, that we are continuing to give, and they can't believe that we really have no influence over this. Thanks.

[Salan] Thank you, Dr. Dunne. I'm going to start with some questions for Dr. Omiesh, actually. We have had a number that are in a similar vein, and I think Dr. Omiesh, you painted a very hopeful picture, one that, you know, is very forward looking, but I think some of those in our audience have some serious concerns that they're worried about. One is the concerns about the human rights violations that we've heard about from the NTC forces in Libya and a number of them are also asking questions about Mahmoud Jabril's endorsement of instituting Islamic elements back into the legal code and making it the basis of legislation, just not one of the bases, but the basis of legislation, so if you could address that.

[Omiesh] Okay. It was actually Mustafa [unintelligible] who actually made that announcement at the liberation speech. But I think for anybody who looks at the Libyan situation and thinks otherwise, meaning that it's fraught with potentials in areas where difficulties will arise, I think will be superficial. I agree with you.

I just tend to be a Libyan-American with a lot of optimism and a lot of hope, so that may have come across. But the fact is that I highlighted issues that I believe will be, you know, very good determinants as to how we move forward. I'm not as concerned about the human rights issue, not to belittle the issue, in fact we are, you know, the recipients of its abuses for many, many years. So the Libyans, in fact, I think, if we look at the revolution over eight months, if you look at many highlights of how it was managed in light of what we know of bitterness and just a legacy of massive abuses over the Libyan people, I'm actually encouraged, and I can take it case by case, including, unfortunately, the final episode of the brutality that was committed against Gaddafi. Nobody can condone any of that violence. You can say all you want about understanding it, but it is not to be condoned, and I hope that the TNC will be transparent in bringing forth an investigation and such. But the fact is that I think overall, the embracing of folks that have even committed capital crimes has been evident in the sense that everybody is not interested in any further violence, and I think the commitment is genuine.

On the other hand, I think, the comments that were raised about the role of Sharia, as my colleague Mr. Ayachi mentioned, and you know, the fact is that Islam is going to become part and parcel of lots of the changes we see, and it behooves us truly to start to think along how we can have an arguably, even a different paradigm or a way of looking at how things come forward. But I think specifically to the Libyan case, I think what Mr. Abdul Jabril was doing was creating some reassurances of his audience, if you may, that Islam will not be out of the picture. I don't think that it was a call for him to actually institute you know a theocracy of sorts, or to say this.

The statement of saying that the Sharia, the Islamic Sharia is the major source of legislation is something that we see very commonly in our lexicon in the region, and we actually see it in the constitutions of other nations as well. Now he did put an end to a debate that was happening, which was is it a source or is it the source, and the fact is, he wanted to side with those who are saying this is the source. However, I think that the fact of the matter is that Mr. Abdul Jabril's style of leadership and the structure we have in place kind of yields to these, I wouldn't call them mistakes, but you know, situations that do happen, they're not reflective I think of the process that is due to take place, and hopefully will take place in a very deciding and decisive and a meaningful way.

[Salan] Thank you, and just to continue on that theme, turning to Tunisia, we had a number of questions about Ennahda. One person was wondering that it seems to be a very rich party, and where did the money come from? Another is talking about because Tunisia had such a long history of being so secular, how is this going to play out, and you know, I know you said that the Ennahda was very moderate and they've been likening themselves to AKP in Turkey, but do you think a lot of people are wondering, that they have a chance to become less AKP-like, shall I say diplomatically?

[Ayachi] Thank you. Yes, Ennahda has had money to spend for the elections indeed, and many people wondered where does this money come from. I think that, that helped them in the elections undoubtedly. They were able to cover the whole territory of the Tunisian Republic, and like the other more secular party, with more financial difficulties to do that.

Where did the money come from? I mean there are rumors. I don't know. The rumors say that the money comes from the Gulf. Some rumors contend that there's some Saudi financing, not Iranian, keep in mind. Ennahda is Sunnis, not Shias. So this is where, allegedly, the money would come from. The concern whether the money comes from foreign sources, which is illegal according to Tunisian law. You cannot run on elections with funds funded from abroad. Secularism. Is there any risk for Ennahda to impose an Islamist agenda or to go relies less on utopia, to establish an Islamic state in Tunisia. The people don't want it. It is a conservative party, sometimes on some issues an ultraconservative party, but also has a liberal economic liberal program. They are calling for return to order, they say that they will answer properly, adequately, the deficit in moral values prevailing in the country. They will be efficient in combating corruption and on and on. And that, they did benefit from, people trusted them and voted for them, and I don't see for the time, because one never knows. I don't think that they will prevail eventually to impose an Islamic state in Tunisia or, as I said, role back women's rights or ... Tunisia is very open to the rest of the world, especially to Europe, there are many tourists who come each year to Tunisia, and that's a major source of income for the government, etc.

They would need to keep that and then themselves, they said we are very conscious of the fact that this is not Afghanistan. We're Tunisian, not ... We are that different in the history of secularism indeed for so long. So yeah, for the time being, I think they will keep working. The challenges are huge. I mean I don't know that they will be able to meet the peoples' expectation, especially in matters of regarding the economy. The economic situation is very serious. The unemployment rate has grown to 40%, which is huge, of course. The growth rate, I think, is about 0.3% now, so the challenge, they will need to, if they want to be efficient, they will need to govern with the alliance, with the coalition, with secular parties, and that will be for the foreseeable future, at least.

[Salan] Thank you. Chris, if we could turn to Yemen, and then I want to pose a follow-up question on Syria. This participant says that Yemen seems to be sticking to the Egyptian model, in terms of peaceful protests, for the most part, amongst the people. I think those who've left the military. Will it move, will it have to move to adopt the Libyan model of military confrontation?

[Blanchard] As I said in my remarks, I think frankly that the popular forces that started this current political confrontation are now almost fundamentally overshadowed by the old guard and their thirty-year conflict that's been going on. I don't want to dismiss the concerns and security of those protestors and people. I'm of the belief that ultimately the decisive factors in the Yemeni situation will be the decisions that are made by a handful of very powerful people and not necessarily through popular armed action in the street. I don't think that would be decisive in this situation.

[Salan] And then on Syria. This one's a bit tricky, well, do you think Bashar Assad will step down? That they'll be able to get an agreement from him to step down, or will he have to be forced to step down? That's the million dollar question, isn't it?

[Blanchard] Sure, yeah. I share the belief that long term, the Assad regime's control of Syria is not sustainable. But I'm not going to join the ranks of those that are predicting when that might happen, or on what terms. I think, I mentioned this in my remarks, I think the troubling thing primarily for Syrians, but also for those concerned about what is happening in Syria, is the slow slide toward a Libyan model.

For two reasons, one for the immediate security consequences of that. The use of armed force, whether its by defecting military personnel or armed Islamists or secular groups, presents an immediate security ... It amplifies the security tension and makes the likelihood of retaliation and use of force by the government more likely and not less likely. And then secondly, from international legitimacy perspective, the Syrian opposition, like the Libyan opposition, is confronting all but insurmountable tasks here, and in order to prevail, it needs to maintain its image as a legitimate spokesperson for all the Syrian people, and in doing so, being able to contrast the tactics being used by the Syrian government against them is a very useful tool, particularly as we remain in the stage where, you know the security council has not yet made a decision about what steps need to be taken.

[Salan] And then, turning to Dr. Dunne, we have a question about how do you see Egypt's military managing foreign policy, especially with respect to Iran, Israel, and Palestine?

[Dunne] Early on in the Egyptian transition shortly after the revolution, we saw, regarding Iran, obviously, we saw an initiative to, I would say regularize relations with Iran. There have been initiatives over the years to improve relations between Egypt and Iran, and they've always faltered because of Egyptian suspicion and President Mubarak's suspicion of what Iran's agenda inside of Egypt might be. And so, we saw an initiative and there were several groups of Egyptians who went and visited Iran and so forth, and then there were, I think that Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States expressed a lot of concern and we saw a couple of trips by the Egyptian Foreign Minister and Prime Minister to the Gulf and we saw some very large pledges coming from Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Qatar to Egypt and then we've seen the whole issue of a rapprochement with Iran quieting down. So you know, that's, we'll see where it goes from there, but it's gotten very quiet on that front.

Regarding Palestine, you know Egypt has taken up some of the initiatives it had before on Palestine and brought them to fruition, brokering a Fatah-Hamas agreement and now brokering the exchange of Gilad Shalit for Palestinian prisoners. I think what's so, these things are not really different from what Egypt did in the past. For example, the content of the Fatah-Hamas agreement was largely the same content that had been there in an agreement brokered quite a while ago, several years ago, but what was different this time, I think, was that Egypt proceeded on these things without really taking into account how the United States really felt about them. Because the early Fatah-Hamas agreement earlier on basically the Egyptians backed off because the United States asked them to. So I think we're going to see an Egyptian foreign policy, whether it's, to be honest with you, whether it's the military in control or even when there is a civilian government in control, you're going to see a foreign policy that is a little bit more responsive to Egyptian popular opinion, and I think a little more independent of the United States.

[Salan] And I have a couple of questions here for Randa. One is: how can Western companies, particularly those outside of defense and security operations, be convinced that it's safe to do business in Libya, and another is simply asking, you talked about the hot-cold marriage and how is Britain going to, now, considering that Tony Blair had a hot marriage with Gaddafi?

[Fahmy Hudome] Okay, well, with respect to the security situation, of course companies need to take a look at what the internal political situation is, and do a security assessment. I know that there are private companies that have their own security personnel that go into the country and take a look at the situation, travel throughout the country, and make an assessment. I mean a lot is going to depend on the confidence that the governing leaders and the Transitional Council reflect. A lot is going to depend on the removal of arms that are presently there, and that, I know certainly the United States is sending a team of consultants to try and help with some of the removal of those weapons.

So I think the assessment has got to come from certainly the private sector. You know the United States government of course does their own assessments of the security situations. So you'll see a variety of travel warnings, travel guidance, with respect to Libya, and some of the countries in North Africa that are going through these transitions. So you know, always security is of utmost importance, cause you want to be able to protect your employees. But I think it will be a little bit easier to see what it is exactly going on there. I will tell you that prior to the revolution, the security situation was actually quite good in Libya. You had many Western companies that were working there and generally very little threat to any of the foreign employees that were working there. So the risk was actually quite low, prior to the revolution.

With respect to the UK and Tony Blair, you know there are individual relationships certainly that were had, but I would just say this, with respect to private businesses. Relationships with particular countries or relationships with private companies from particular countries, old habits die hard. Many of the individuals who may be in a position to make decisions on business contracts in Libya may be some of the very same people who were in that position prior to this revolution. That being said, from my experience, politics trumps everything. Certainly the way business was done in Libya prior to the revolution was, there was very high emphasis placed on the relationship between Libya and the particular country.

So using the UK as an example, the UK was held in very high favor because of a variety of efforts that the UK did including, as I mentioned, reaching out initially to the Libyans and negotiating what was ultimately a very fruitful negotiation in which Libya gave up their WMDs. You saw quite a strong relationship with some of the other European countries, including France, and the way that you saw it reflected, and Italy, the way you saw it reflected, was the rewarding of contracts. I mean pure and simple. The cold marriage between the US and Libya, you saw that time and time again, when either US companies lost out on major contracts or never got to the point at which they were considered. So it was a difficult environment. I think it will be better, but I do think there is a renewed appreciation for the United States. I mean the fact of the matter is we are the best at what

we do. We have the best technology, we have the best teachers. We have the best implementers, and you know, I would hope that certainly the political situation between the US and Libya is better and that will be reflected in the business environment in the future.

[Salan] Thank you very much. I want to thank our panelists.

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Dr. Dunne's publications include "Egypt's Democratic Transition: Five Myths About the Economy and International Assistance (Legatum Institute and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011); "Egypt: From Stagnation to Revolution" (in America's Challenges in the Greater Middle East, Palgrave MacMillan 2011); "The Baby, the Bathwater, and the Freedom Agenda in the Middle East" (Washington Quarterly, 2009); "Incumbent Regimes and the 'King's Dilemma' in the Arab World: Promise and Threat of Managed Reform." (with Marina Ottaway, in Getting to Pluralism, Carnegie Endowment, 2009); "A Post-Pharaonic Egypt." (American Interest, 2008); and The Ups and Downs of Political Reform in Egypt" (with Amr Hamzawy, in Beyond the Façade: Political Reform in the Arab World, 2008) and Democracy in Contemporary Egyptian Political Discourse (John Benjamins, 2003).

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Mr. Blanchard has authored or co-authored numerous CRS reports for the Congress, including products on the Gulf Security Dialogue and related US arms sales, US relations with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and regional perspectives on the Iraq conflict. His work has been included in national security syllabi at prominent US universities and cited in leading national and international publications. As a Presidential Management Fellow, he served as a policy advisor on the Middle East with the Office of Terrorist Financing and Financial Crime at the US Department of the Treasury.

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Ms. Fahmy Hudome is the President of Fahmy Hudome International (FHI), a strategic consulting firm which provides critical advice and counsel to Fortune 500 companies, foreign governments, media organizations, and private sector entities with business interests in the Middle East and North Africa. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Council on US-Arab Relations.

Prior to founding FHI, Ms. Fahmy Hudome was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as the United States Associate Deputy Secretary of Energy. Working with the White House and the Departments of State and Commerce, she helped develop and implement the Bush Administration's international energy policy. Ms. Fahmy Hudome was also the point person at the Department of Energy for increased advocacy on behalf of American energy companies seeking business around the globe. From 1995-2001, Ms. Fahmy Hudome served as Counselor to United States Senator Spencer Abraham (R-MI). During the six years she spent in the legislative branch, she was credited with shaping many pieces of legislation that affected US interests abroad, including financial assistance to US allies in the Middle East.

Prior to her government service, Ms. Fahmy Hudome was a practicing attorney with the law firm of Willkie, Farr, and Gallagher, where she specialized in areas of international trade and corporate litigation. She received her JD from the Georgetown University Law Center, where she held the post of Administrative Editor of The Georgetown Journal of International Law.

Ms. Fahmy Hudome's expertise in international economic policy and energy has been sought by the US Secretary of State, who appointed her to serve on the US State Department Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy, and by the Secretary of Energy, who appointed her to serve on the US Secretary of Energy Advisory Board. Ms. Fahmy Hudome's opinions on international diplomacy have been published in the *Wall Street Journal*, and she appears frequently as an expert analyst on NBC's *Today Show*, MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, and Al-Jazeera.

Dr. Esam Omiesh

Dr. Esam Omiesh is Director of the Libyan Emergency Task Force and political director of the Libyan Council of North America. He was recently appointed as the Libyan Embassy liaison to the Libyan American community. Dr Omiesh is a graduate of Georgetown

University where he earned degrees in international relations and biology. A physician and the chief of general surgery division of Inova Alexandria hospital, Dr Omiesh has just returned from a three-week medical mission to the western mountains of Libya where he was also able to visit a newly liberated Tripoli.