



Major Stephen R. Struber  
Air Force Fellow (ISD/DoS)  
Libya Stabilization Policy Proposal  
Air University



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....2  
Historical Context, 2011-Present.....4  
Common Definition of Stability.....6  
What and When Stability Efforts Should be Initiated.....8  
Global Fragility Act and Strategy.....12  
Risks.....17  
Conclusion.....18  
Bibliography.....19



## Executive Summary

With an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world forcibly displaced and violent conflict driving 80 percent of global humanitarian needs, stability is unquestioningly a national security interest.<sup>1</sup> Global stability promotes respect for international law and norms, supports self determination and human rights, as well as many other democratic norms and institutions championed by the United States after World War II. Furthermore, global stability is a prerequisite to shift resources to great power competition. Instrumental to global stability is a stable North Africa; particularly a stable Libya. Stability enables Libya to take responsibility for suppressing terrorism and smuggling; freeing U.S. and allied resources for countering global revisionist efforts from China and Russia. To achieve the goal of stability in Libya, the U.S. congress passed new legislation to enhance efforts to stabilize conflict-affected areas. To ensure and assure sufficient political as well as financial resources to address instability in North Africa, Libya should be selected as a fragile state under the Global Fragility Act.

While stability in North Africa has always been elusive, a new phase began during the 2011 Arab Spring protests in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Each country experienced protests with results ranging from peaceful policy changes in Morocco, to government overthrow in Tunisia, to NATO military intervention in Libya. The results of the protests dramatically and rapidly altered the political landscape of North Africa, particularly for Libya.

“The United States has compelling national security and economic interests in reducing levels of violence and promoting stability in areas affected by armed conflict, especially to consolidate security gains against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other non-state armed groups.”<sup>2</sup> General Thomas Waldhauser, former Commander of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2017, “instability in Libya and North Africa may be the most significant, near-term threat to U.S. and allies’ interests on the continent.”<sup>3</sup> In an effort to reinvigorate stabilization activities, the Department of State (State), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense (DoD) published a Stabilization Assistance Review. The definitions and principles

---

<sup>1</sup> Global Fragility Act of 2019. HR 2116. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 21 May 2019, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Kristen Cordell, (Senior Advisor), et-al, “Stabilization Assistance Review, January 2018, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Libya Stabilization Act of 2019, H.R. 4644. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 11 October 2019, 2-3.

outlined in this document provide a common foundation for diplomatic engagement and a stabilization policy in Libya.

Libya is a fragile state experiencing ongoing violent conflict [see figure 1], poverty, civil war, war economics, poor governance, smuggling, international interference as well as competition for power and control. To overcome the outdated patchwork of assistance efforts that previously governed foreign assistance, the Global Fragility Act (GFA) establishes US policy to ensure that all relevant federal departments and agencies coordinate to: achieve long-term goals, improve global, regional and local coordination, expand U.S. foreign assistance programs, support research and development, and improve authorities needed to enable federal departments to prevent violence and fragility globally.<sup>4</sup> Libya meets both criteria laid out in the act for eligibility to receive funding: conflict affected areas and areas liberated from terrorist organizations. The Department of State is the overall lead in selecting priority countries and priority regions for the global fragility initiative based on levels of violence, ranking on recognized global fragility lists, USG early warning watch lists and likelihood that selection would measurably stabilize or prevent violence in the selected country or region. Libya must be included in The GFA and the supporting Global Fragility Strategy (GFS) to boost political support and funding for ongoing and previously unaffordable stability projects.



Figure 1: [excerpt] Map of select countries with more than 1000 battle-related deaths over the last five years where internationally supported “stabilization” efforts have been active.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Global Fragility Act of 2019. HR 2116. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 21 May 2019, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Kristen Cordell, (Senior Advisor), et-al, “Stabilization Assistance Review, January 2018, 3.

### Historical Context, 2011-Present

On December 17, 2010 Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolated on the streets of Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, initiating a chain reaction that spread throughout the Maghrieb. Demonstrations began in Libya on February 17, 2011, embroiling Libya in a civil war that persists to this day. The Libyan conflict began in Benghazi with the arrest of Fathi Terbil following a peaceful demonstration against Colonel Muammar Qaddafi and four decades of oppressive leadership. Qaddafi responded to the protests with brute force, savagely attacking unarmed civilians with air force aircraft supported by ground forces. Within a month, up to 2,000 civilians had been killed.<sup>6</sup>

On March 17, 2011 the United Nations Security Council voted to authorize a no-fly zone over Libya and all necessary means (except for foreign troops) to protect civilians. UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011)<sup>7</sup> authorized what would be North Atlantic Treaty Organization's first military operation in an Arab country and first application of Responsibility to Protect.<sup>8</sup> France, Great Britain, and the United States took immediate military action to enforce a no-fly zone. On March 22, NATO began to enforce an arms embargo. On March 31, NATO along with the full support of the League of Arab States and the UN, took full control when Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR began. The purpose of the operation was solely to protect civilians, not to support one side over the other or provide close air support to Libyan ground forces on either side. Considered a military success, Qaddafi's regime collapsed just 204 days after the operation began, attacks against civilians by the regime ended and NATO operations ceased on October 31. Unfortunately, with no roll in post-conflict stabilization.<sup>9</sup>

The first Libyan elections (since Qaddafi's coup in 1969) to elect the General National Congress were held in July 2012. Despite the euphoria of having emerged from Qaddafi's rule, the National Transitional Council was composed of early defectors from his regime and

---

<sup>6</sup> Florence Gaub, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Libya: Reviewing Operation Unified Protector* (Carlisle, PA:U.S. Army War College, 2013), 2.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1973 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 3-5.

<sup>8</sup> Florence Gaub, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Libya: Reviewing Operation Unified Protector* (Carlisle, PA:U.S. Army War College, 2013), iii.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, iii-3, 19.

long-time exiles thus lacked sufficient authority to resist localized interests or legitimacy to unify Libyan citizenry. For example, Islamists eliminated a 10% female quota and other groups forced infighting over how to divide seats in the transitional congress and constitutional drafting body. In the end, concessions were made to appease regional, communal and personalized politics. Compromises which further weakened the government's legitimacy to stabilize the country and consolidate democratic gains.

While the election turnout was encouraging (2.5 million Libyans voted of which 1.61 million were women) the results were ambiguous. Due to the division of congressional seats, 120 for individuals and 80 for parties, no one candidate or party could claim a mandate to lead. The first attempts by Mustafa Abushagur to form a government failed when he lost a vote of confidence. By the time Ali Zeidan formed a government in October, political power was already diffusing from Tripoli, marking a steady deterioration of centralized government and security.<sup>10</sup>

Legitimized by the NATO/Arab League intervention, armed organizations began to grow, consolidating power through violence and spoiling the transitional process. Where already weak state institutions failed, militias filled the void. Effectively becoming the police, military, and even had contracts with foreign governments to provide security. The obvious deterioration of security, enabled by fractured militias and absent central government, created space for radical Islamists to increase attacks on targets in the east. Attacks that culminated on September 11, 2012 in an assault on State Department facilities that killed the U.S. Ambassador, and three other U.S. government employees.<sup>11</sup>

Libya rapidly spiraled out of control, by 2013 Libyan policies were actively incentivizing the growth of militias, nearly three-quarters of which did not play any part in the 2011 overthrow of Qaddafi. Furthermore, Libya's oil wealth and global assets were not sufficient to keep pace with payments to militias and the general population. By 2012, public sector absentee rates were fifty percent, only forty percent of state police officers were actively serving and every Libyan citizen was receiving a direct subsidy. In mid 2014 the price of oil, Libya's sole source of

---

<sup>10</sup> Jacob Mundy, *Libya* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 119-127.

<sup>11</sup> *Idib*, 129-135.

meaningful income, collapsed from \$100 per barrel to \$40 per barrel which forced Libya's central bank to run deficits to sustain payments.

In 2014, Libya's transitional authorities finally scheduled an overdue vote to elect the constitutional drafting body which quickly dissolved itself and called for a vote for a House of Representatives and a presidential executive. Due to low voter turnout, exacerbated by an Amazigh boycott, the House of Representatives failed to produce a clear sense of the will of the governed. In response, a group of politicians broke away and unilaterally reinstated the Congress in August 2014, resulting in two competing governments which returned Libya to civil war.<sup>12</sup> Today, Khalifa Haftar controls about 80 percent of Libya and his military actions have displaced approximately 120,000 civilians.<sup>13</sup> To complicate the Libyan landscape even further, Haftar and his forces have received assistance and equipment from Russian mercenaries as well as from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Jordan.<sup>14</sup> If the United States and its allies hope to stabilize Libya, part of the solution will have to include all of these actors in comprehensive or bi-lateral peace agreements.

#### Common Definition of Stabilization Activities

U.S. government efforts should seek to align diplomatic development and defense efforts to achieve goals ranging from conflict prevention to long-term peace building and engagement. Increasing stability and reducing violence in conflict-affected areas is essential to realize America's national security goals and advance a world in which nations can embrace their sovereignty and citizens can realize their full potential.<sup>15</sup> Stabilization is a political endeavor and will be challenged by growing American and European skepticism for massive nation-building efforts. Stabilization shifts away from nation-building and reconstruction by limiting resources

---

<sup>12</sup> Jacob Mundy, *Libya* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 149-165.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Gallagher, "In Libya, Peace is Possible if Foreign Interference Ends", USIP, 19 Nov 19, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/11/libya-peace-possible-if-foreign-interference-ends>.

<sup>14</sup> David Kirkpatrick, "Russian Snipers, Missiles and Warplanes Try to Tilt Libyan War", New York Times, 7 Nov 19,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/world/middleeast/russia-libya-mercenaries.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Department of State, *Stabilization Assistance Review*, (Washington, DC, 2018), 4.

commitments, increasing burden sharing among donor nations and requiring host nations to coordinate their own internal resource commitments and political will.

The United States and its international partners have been seeking to achieve these goals for decades. Hampering these efforts, stabilization activities were ill-defined and worse, poorly coordinated; a new and more disciplined approach was needed. The Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Agency for International Development (USAID) have defined key terms to guide renewed efforts.

**Fragility:** A country's vulnerability to armed conflict, large-scale violence, and/or instability, including its inability to manage transnational threats or other significant shocks due to ineffective governance, weak social cohesion, illegitimate institutions, and/or a repressive climate that prevents the exercise of human rights and religious freedom.<sup>16</sup>

**Stabilization:** Political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities and systems can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence. Transitional in nature, stabilization may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution, deliver targeted basic services, and establish a foundation for the return of displaced people and longer-term development<sup>17</sup>

Typically, stabilization is intended to be short term and aimed at achieving political stability; without political stability long-term development is impossible. Self-sufficiency is the end state for stabilization efforts to allow the development of institutions that are inclusive and responsive and accountable to all groups.

A revitalized approach to stabilization, based on political engagement, should be designed on lessons learned from past efforts. First, stabilization must focus on political goals at all levels; local, national, regional, societal and institutions. Without a political settlement, progress beyond initial promises of progress and good will may be impossible. A road map to political stability and firm, binding agreements must be established. A clear understanding of what political and financial commitments are expected from the partner nation and what the partner nation is willing to deliver. Also, a clear division of labor among international donors

---

<sup>16</sup> Department of State, *Global Fragility Strategy*, US government white paper (Washington, DC: Department of State, February 2020), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Department of State, *Stabilization Assistance Review*, (Washington, DC, 2018), 10.

based on each nation's areas of comparable advantage should be agreed to. Second, “clear lines of authority between and within U.S. Government departments and agencies would improve effectiveness, reduce duplication, and confusion, enable greater accountability, and fully operationalize a whole-of-government approach.”<sup>18</sup> The Department of State should have overall lead for stabilization efforts, USAID should have responsibility for leading implementation and the Department of Defense should support both agencies by providing security through a new concept called Defense Support to Stabilization.<sup>19</sup>

Civilian stabilization experts should be forward-deployed alongside military elements to enable continuous engagement. “It is imperative to have civilians with the appropriate knowledge and skill sets on the ground and able to engage with citizen groups, analyze local dynamics, identify the right local partners to advance the political strategy, and routinely monitor and adjust programs and strategy to keep pace with the evolving political dynamic.”<sup>20</sup> Through continuous engagement, small projects driven by the local government and designed to meet a unified political strategy could initiate momentum towards short-term stabilization objectives. Increased local support builds legitimacy and diminishes appeal of extremist organizations.

The U.S. government must engage our partners to co-invest in stabilization activities in line with agreed upon strategic outcomes. The State Department and USAID should work with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Bank for Development to implement coordinated reforms and investment. Additionally, the United States should encourage the United Nations and international financial institutions to adopt the above common approach and definition of stabilization

### What and When Stability Efforts Should be Initiated

Multiple groups began cobbling together postwar stabilization planning that included a range of plans from how to respond to a complete regime change thru Qaddafi conducting a scorched earth campaign to remain in power. The Contact Group (United States, United

---

<sup>18</sup> Department of State, *Stabilization Assistance Review*, (Washington, DC, 2018), 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia) met in Rome to set up a stabilization and response team for Libya. High level task forces were set up at the White House. Staff evacuated from the U.S. embassy in Tripoli to Washington D.C. began working on stabilization proposals. Libyan rebels established their own seventy-person post-conflict team in Doha, Qatar. However, between the refusal to allow boots on the ground and the relative calm in Tripoli after the war there would be no post-conflict stabilization force or significant effort to bolster National Transition Council legitimacy.<sup>21</sup> Not until the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote to the Security Council were first steps to aid Libya established in the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) in 2011.

Before transitioning to the GNA, the NTC was open to assistance for democratic elections, public security, transitional justice, human rights protection and building the rule of law.<sup>22</sup> The United States and allies can help stabilize Libya by strengthening bilateral relationships with the Government of National Accord (GNA) in areas such as energy and basic services development. Demonstrating that warring powers can better achieve their goals through negotiation with the GNA. Additionally, convincing or compelling nations to stop importing weapons in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2473 (2019)<sup>23</sup>, 1970 (2011)<sup>24</sup>, and 1973 (2011)<sup>25</sup>. If foreign powers ceased their involvement in Libya, the country's protracted civil war could come to an end.

The U.S. and U.N. has enacted several tools to compel or reward compliance to contribute to Libya's peace and stability. First, Executive Order 13726 allows for the blocking of property and suspending entry into the United States anyone who threatens the peace, security, and stability of Libya.<sup>26</sup> Second, the Libya Stabilization Act allows sanctions and war-crimes to

---

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi, Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 143-146.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn, *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 127-148.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2473 (2019), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 1.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1970 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 2-3.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1973 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 3-5.

<sup>26</sup> Executive Order 13726, *Blocking Property and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Persons Contributing to the Situation in Libya*, Vol. 81, No. 77, April 21, 2016, 1-2.

be brought against individuals and parties engaging in attacks on civilians, medical workers, and critical infrastructure.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, to leverage diplomatic relations to de-escalate current fighting, compel foreign interventionists to abide by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2473 (2019)<sup>28</sup>, 1970 (2011)<sup>29</sup>, and 1973 (2011)<sup>30</sup> thus encourage parties to return to a political peace process.

Stabilization efforts in Libya should include civil security, access to dispute resolution, basic services, return of displaced people and long term development. A critical first step toward these efforts includes returning the Department of State's diplomatic mission to Libya without waiting for a political (or military) settlement. Lacking a forward diplomatic presence in Libya precludes true understanding of ground realities, working relationship with governments or pressure against foreign malign influence. Assessing quantity and quality of basic government services (electricity, water, garbage collection, healthcare, etc.) will inform development of a stabilization policy.

Currently, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is running 14 projects in Libya, most critically the Stabilization Facility for Libya. Some objectives include: refurbish and re-equip essential service facilities, boost municipal capacity, and support key public goods. Phase II of the Stabilization Facility has a \$92M budget from 14 donors (\$8M from the U.S.), covering 11 cities (including Tripoli), benefits 2 million people (31% of total population) and partners with the Government of National Accord.<sup>31</sup>

In January 2020, Germany, Algeria, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Turkey, the Republic of the Congo, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and High Representatives of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, and the League of Arab States gathered to discuss stability in Libya called the

---

<sup>27</sup> Libya Stabilization Act of 2019, H.R. 4644. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 11 October 2019, 7.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2473 (2019), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 1.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1970 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1973 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 3-5.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "Stabilization Facility for Libya", accessed 18 March 2020, <https://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/projects/Stabilization-Facility-for-Libya.html>.

Berlin Process. The group began by recognizing Libyan stability is a global threat to international peace and security. Additionally, the Berlin Process acknowledged there is no military solution in Libya but only a comprehensive political solution will result in stability.<sup>32</sup>

The Berlin Process published a multi-point-report emphasizing; ceasefire, arms embargo, return to the political process, security sector reform, respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and follow-up. Berlin Process members called for termination of all military movements, prisoner exchange, ceasefire negotiations and sanctions against those who violate ceasefire arrangements. An arms embargo is already in place (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970 (2011))<sup>33</sup>. The nations committed to fully respect and implement the arms embargo, called on all actors to refrain from supporting any parties involved in the conflict, and committed to strengthening monitoring of potential breaches of the arms embargo. Additionally, they committed to support all Libyan parties in ceasefire agreements in a intra-Libyan political process as well as accept the outcome of such a political process. The group also called for restoration of the monopoly of the legitimate use of force to the state by establishing a unified national security, police and military force under civilian control. Lastly, the participants recognized the lack of due process and lack of human rights law is a contributing factor to instability.<sup>34</sup>

The United States has missed opportunities to assess, engage, and direct stabilization programs due to long delays from a lack of standing authorities and structures. To solve this, the State Department, the Defense Department, and USAID should have a mechanism to rapidly deploy civilian-led Stabilization, Transition and Response Teams (START). The purpose would be to support Chiefs of Mission and Combatant Commands to rapidly respond to conflict areas and implement stabilization activities.<sup>35</sup> In Libya, this engagement should be led by the Department of State and support efforts at the local and national level, in areas that are peaceful

---

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Security Council, *The Berlin Conference on Libya*, (Washington, D.C.), 19 January 2020, 1-2

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1970 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011, 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> United Nations Security Council, *The Berlin Conference on Libya*, (Washington, D.C.), 19 January 2020, 2-5

<sup>35</sup> Department of State, *Stabilization Assistance Review*, (Washington, DC, 2018), 18.

and in the suburbs of Tripoli. The Global Fragility Act as well as the Libya Stabilization Act, the executive order, a renewed diplomatic mission, UNDP Stabilization Facility, global engagement, and rapid response teams are the right tools to increase funding and global political focus to stabilize Libya.

### Global Fragility Act and Strategy

The Global Fragility Act was signed into law in December 2019 as part of the 2020 Appropriations Act to strengthen the capacity of the United States to be an effective leader of international efforts to prevent extremism and violent conflict.. The act is intended to enhance the effectiveness of US stability efforts by ensuring all relevant departments and agencies coordinate to achieve a coherent, long term stabilization strategy. Additionally, it seeks to improve global, regional, and local political coordination of international development and donor organizations. The Department of State (DoS), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Department of Defense (DoD) are tasked with building a comprehensive and integrated ten year Global Fragility Strategy (GFS) by September 2020. The GFS must address the causes and a corresponding strategy to correct and prevent global fragility. By December 2020, a minimum of five countries or regions are to be selected for implementation of the GFS on the basis of US national security interests, indicators of fragility, burden sharing, host nation commitment and likelihood assistance would measurably reduce fragility. To support the Global Fragility Strategy, the act establishes a Prevention and Stabilization Fund and a Complex Crisis Fund. Contributions to the respective funds are \$200 million and \$30 million for each fiscal year 2020 through 2024.

Global Fragility Guiding Principles will be:<sup>36</sup>

**Core U.S. National Interests.** The GFS will focus on addressing priority national security interests as outlined by the 2017 National Security Strategy, especially addressing great power competition and threats to democratic institutions and human rights.

---

<sup>36</sup> Global Fragility Act of 2019. HR 2116. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 21 May 2019, 2.

**Partnership-building and Burden Sharing.** The GFS will ensure vigorous U.S. diplomacy with host-nations, local actors, and international partners to ensure sustainable success. The GFS will identify mechanisms for burden-sharing and public-private partnerships, including mobilizing private resources.

**Whole-of-Government Approach.** The GFS will promote an integrated, coordinated whole-of-Government Approach. The GFS will promote an integrated, coordinated whole-of-government approach that includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities to achieve unity of purpose and effort and prioritize and sequence interventions.

**Local Ownership and Adaptation.** The GFS will reflect and reinforce field-driven leadership and analysis coordinated through U.S. country teams, as reflected in respective Integrated Country Strategy and /or Country Development Cooperation Strategy.

**Stakeholder Consultations.** The U.S. government will develop and implement the GFS through early and regular consultation with local stakeholders, appropriate Congressional committees, like minded partners, donors, and civil society actors, including women's organizations and religious leaders.

**Data-Driven Analysis.** The GFS will be rooted in data-driven analysis and evaluation. It will leverage new technology and cyber to better stabilize conflict-affected areas, prevent violence, and address fragility globally.

**Human Resources and Access.** The GFS will address challenges related to human resources, funding, and other constraints that affect the ability of the United States to conduct continuous engagement, targeted assistance, and monitoring and evaluation in fragile environments.

“U.S. adversaries and malign actors use fragile states to engage in political subversion that exploits resources and undermines state sovereignty, democratic values, human rights, and religious freedom.”<sup>37</sup> Fragile states threaten U.S. and allied national security interests as sources of terrorism, mass refugee events, organized crime and peer state competition. The Global Fragility Act (GFA) and Global Fragility Strategy (GFS) is intended to address previous failed

---

<sup>37</sup> Department of State, *Global Fragility Strategy*, US government white paper (Washington, DC: Department of State, February 2020), 1.

efforts to prevent violence and improve stability. The GFA and GFS shifts away from reactive policies and efforts to prioritized initiatives based on analysis, burden sharing, host nation commitment and a whole of government strategy.

The act was established to stabilize conflict affected areas by ensuring U.S. political interest and all relevant federal departments coordinate to achieve long term goals and improve global, regional and local coordination. The act tasks the Departments of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Defense, Department of the Treasury with establishing a ten-year strategy to address global fragility. The strategy is to strengthen the capacity of the United States to be an effective leader of international efforts to prevent extremism and violent conflict. The strategy calls for selection of five countries or regions to prioritize for investment.

In accordance with the GFA, advocating for a fragile country or region to receive funding through the GFA requires an assessment of U.S. national interests, national and local partner ownership, risks, opportunities, and the operating environment. Libya is a geopolitical interest for the United States. Vast oil reserves and weak government institutions have attracted peer competitors (Russia and China) to the region. Russia is interested in Libya for its vast oil reserves, arms sales, and gaining access to coastal territories as part of a larger regional strategy to isolate Europe and control the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>38</sup> China's interests in Libya are geo-political. While cautious to engage directly in Libya, China is likely to use Libya as an example to counter the western model of development to increase its own influence in the Middle East and North Africa. Additionally, ungoverned territory is an incubator for ISIS, AQIM and organized crime recruiting and training while also threatening the peace and stability of neighboring countries; particularly Tunisia. Furthermore, mass migration to Europe, specifically Italy, threatens to overwhelm humanitarian systems. Ensuring Libya, or the surrounding region, does not turn into ceded territory satisfies the National Security Strategy requirement discussed in the GFA.

National and local partners are committed to improving the conditions in Libya. Thirteen countries plus the European Union have contributed \$86 million to stabilization activities such as

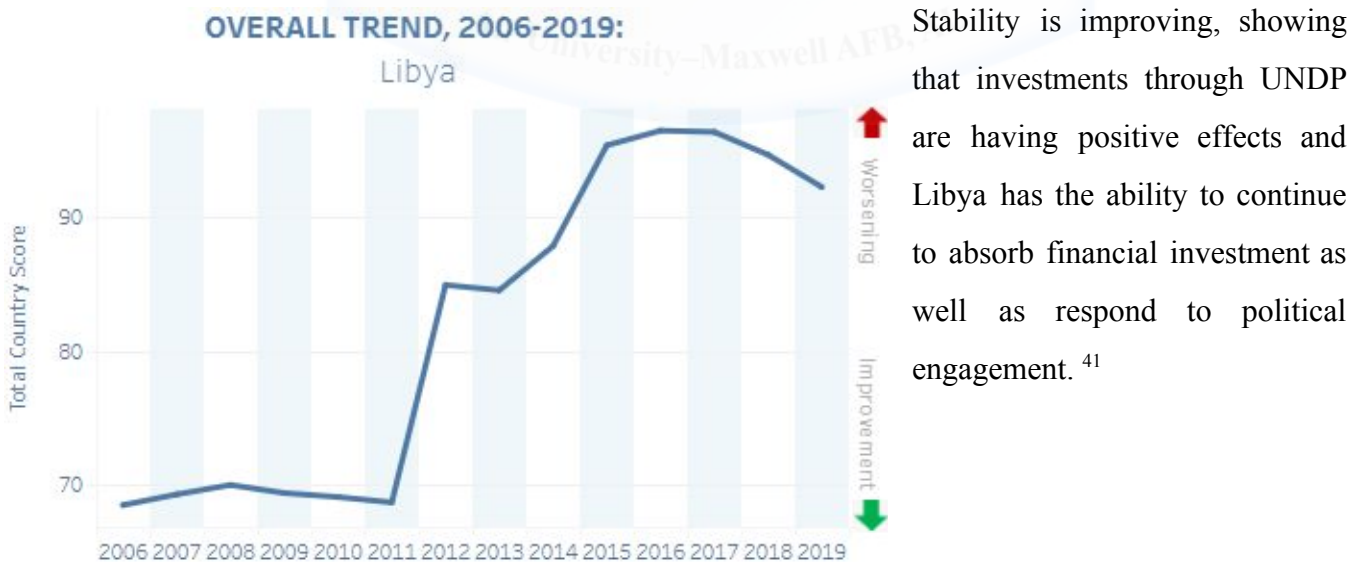
---

<sup>38</sup> Libya Stabilization Act of 2019, H.R. 4644. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 11 October 2019, 12.

essential services, public goods, government institutions and local conflict resolution.<sup>39</sup> The opportunity to significantly improve Libyan stability is high when working with local leaders outside the active conflict zones. Within the GNA or LNA-controlled zones, international institutions such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are able to operate as long as a neutral lens is maintained.

Risks are significant, Libya is a fragile state stuck in a security trap; “one in which efforts to achieve local security only reinforced insecurity at the national level.”<sup>40</sup> To exacerbate the trap, interim GNA leaders began incentivizing militia formation through compensation programs, effectively turning militias into a national jobs program for unemployed young men. Furthermore, by establishing a second government in eastern Libya, Khalifa Haftar increased the country’s instability. His army, with support from Egypt, U.A.E., and Russia, is waging a civil war against the GNA in Tripoli.

Figure 2 and 3 are excerpts from the Fragile States Index, analysis of this data is required by the global fragility act to ensure stability investments are justified. The higher the line on the x-axis, the higher the risk for instability. These graphs show that while Libya is indeed a fragile state, it is not a lost cause wherein good money will continue to be spent on bad investments.

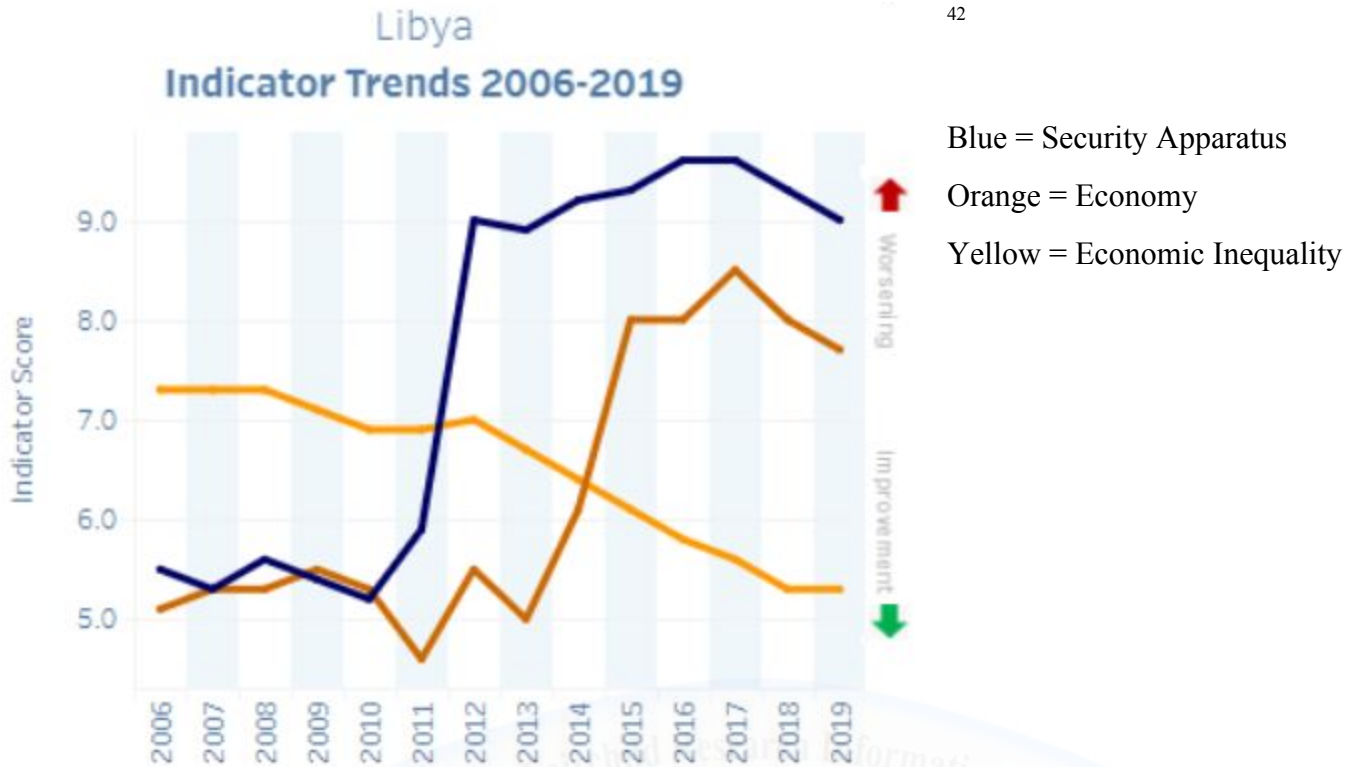


<sup>39</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Stabilization facility for Libya”, accessed 18 March 2020,

<https://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/projects/Stabilization-Facility-for-Libya.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Jacob Mundy, *Libya* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018), 14.

<sup>41</sup> Fragile States Index, *Libya*, accessed 18 March 2020, <https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/>



Once selected for GFA, assistance should be targeted towards large cross regional projects and political negotiations for local conflict resolution. A good example of the effects of political engagement happened in a partially renovated hospital in Ubari. A group of Tuareg militia forces were occupying the hospital and limiting who could receive care. They were controlling the building ostensibly because of unpaid hospital bills, but likely due to unpaid protection money. Rather than pay the bills, UNDP representatives engaged with Ubari and Tuareg political leaders to resolve the conflict peacefully. By creating a local peace deal, renovations were able to be completed, the hospital was allowed to provide equal service to everyone, and Tuareg fighters kept the peace. This local peace deal created a precedent for micro-peace deals which could be implemented throughout the country between local militias and local governments. GFA could enable this sort of political engagement and micro-peace treaties on a wider scale and help build trust. Another opportunity for political engagement is a UNDP program to enable a women's group to restore oasis land lost to desertification. This process

<sup>42</sup> Fragile States Index, *Libya*, accessed 18 March 2020, [https:// fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/](https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/)

would improve agricultural output within Libya while also improving women's standing and reputation in their communities.<sup>43</sup> Finally, the border between Libya and Tunisia is generally porous and allows for nearly free movement (mostly illegal) of people and goods across the border. Using the political engagement associated with the GFA to secure the border will help both countries. Tunisia's fledgling democracy would face less uncertainty and Libyan border town would see less criminal trafficking.<sup>44</sup>

Separate from the political engagement enabled by the GFA, the financial resources from GFA engagement would be best suited to very large, cross regional projects that would support the peace process. The purpose should not necessarily be to provide basic services but to create large networks that support the country and facilitate cross regional relationship building. With the ongoing civil war over national political control, these efforts must continue to be flagged under UN agencies. One such example is the Great Man-Made River that brings fresh water from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System to coastal cities such as Tripoli (in the west) and Benghazi (in the east). This system has been ignored and needs tens of millions of dollars invested to update and upgrade to ensure uninterrupted service. This is a perfect project for the GFA's 10-year strategy that would force eastern and western politicians to work together and rely on each other to build trust and lead to achievement of political stabilization at senior levels. Another option is to invest in the nation's capacity to generate energy and design infrastructure to force Tripoli and Benghazi to rely on one another during times of power interruption. Again, the primary purpose is not to produce electricity for stabilization but force elites to work together.<sup>45</sup>

### Risks

Executing the proposed stability and development assistance policies face a litany of risks such as minimal diplomatic engagement, enforcement of current international law, and the ongoing conflict between the GNA and LNA. The United States does not have a continuous

---

<sup>43</sup> Dr. Peter Rundell (United Nations Development Programme), interview by the author, 18 March 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Major General (Ret) Michael Kingsley (AFRICOM Deputy Commander), interview by the author, 20 January 2020 and 17 March 2020.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. Peter Rundell (United Nations Development Programme), interview by the author, 18 March 2020.

diplomatic mission in Libya thus logistical challenges make assessing needs, anti-corruption efforts, and measuring impacts of stabilization efforts difficult to appraise. Additionally, government-to-government relationships are impossible to establish which poses a barrier to coordinated stability efforts. To mitigate these risks, the United States should coordinate and fund regular diplomatic day trips into Libyan population centers as well as START trips. Enforcement of UNSC resolutions has been weak, sustaining the conflict between GNA and LNA. Mitigation steps must either leverage commitments made at the Berlin Process to stop arms shipments or stability efforts should avoid active conflict regions. Lastly, internal GNA legitimacy is questionable, as the only real support the GNA receives is from the UN. The LNA, on the other hand, enjoys general public support in the east and fields a professional army which has the support of several nations throughout North Africa and Gulf states. To mitigate in the short-term, the United States should maintain neutrality by avoiding attributable political or stabilization support directly to the GNA or LNA by using intermediaries such as UNDP and NGOs.

### Conclusion

Stability in Libya is a United States national security interest both for suppressing terrorism, international terrorism, and peer competition. With stabilization defined, the institutions in place and the political and financial resources from the Global Fragility Act in place, stability in Libya is possible. Using the political assistance and development funds provided by the Global Fragility Act international organizations, government organizations, and nongovernmental organizations will have all the tools necessary to support the Government of National Accord in its efforts to effectively govern. Just as important is simultaneously pressuring international spoilers of the peace process, such as Russia, Egypt and the U.A.E., to convince them to change their counterproductive behavior. Through political engagement and financial resources Libya can reach a political solution and lasting stability; developing into a true democracy with robust institutions envisioned by citizens of Libya after the Arab Spring and NATO intervention.

Bibliography

1. Chivvis, Christopher S. *Toppling Qaddafi, Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
2. Cole, Peter and McQuinn, Brian. *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.
3. *Global Fragility Strategy*, US government White Paper. Washington, DC: Department of State, February 2020
4. Department of State, *Stabilization Assistance Review*, (Washington, DC, 2018).
5. Fragile States Index, *Libya*, accessed 18 March 2020, [https:// fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/](https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/)
6. Gallagher, Adam. “In Libya, Peace is Possible if Foreign Interference Ends”, USIP, 19 November 2019.
7. Gaub, Florence. *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Libya: Reviewing Operation Unified Protector*. Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2013.
8. Global Fragility Act of 2019. House Resolution 2116. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 21 May 2019.
9. Kingsley, Michael, Major General (Ret), (AFRICOM Deputy Commander), interview by the author, 20 January 2020 and 17 March 2020.
10. Kirkpatrick, David. “Russian Snipers, Missiles and Warplanes Try to Tilt Libyan War”, New York Times, 7 November 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/world/middleeast/russia-libya-mercenaries.html>.
11. Libya Stabilization Act of 2019. House Resolution 4644. 116th Cong., 1st sess., 11 October 2019
12. Mundy, Jacob. *Libya*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018.
13. Executive Order 13726. Blocking Property and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Persons Contributing to the Situation in Libya, 19 April 2016.
14. Rundell, Peter Dr., (United Nations Development Programme), interview by the author, 18 March 2020.

15. The Berlin Conference On Libya, US Fed News Service, Including US State News.  
Washington, DC: HT Digital Streams Limited, 19 January 2020, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2341555752?accountid=14741>
16. United Nations Development Programme, *Stabilization facility for Libya*, accessed 18 March 2020, <https://www.ly.undp.org/content/libya/en/home/projects/Stabilization-Facility-for-Libya.html>.
17. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1970 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011.
18. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1973 (2011), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011.
19. United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2473 (2019), 6,498th meeting, 17 March 2011.
20. Cordell, Kristen (Senior Advisor), et al. "Stabilization Assistance Review." *A Framework for Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Government Efforts to Stabilize Conflict Affected Areas*, January 2018, Accessed January 16, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SAR-Final.pdf>.

Opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied within are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the Air University, the United States Air Force, the Department of Defense, or any other US government agency.