

THE UNITED STATES AND LIBYA: FROM CONFRONTATION TO NORMALIZATION

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Relations between the United States and Libya have experienced a staggering improvement since the close of the 1990s. The normalization that has taken place in a relationship characterized by three decades of mutual hatred is the result of a multitude of factors: secret diplomatic discussions, effects of the U.S. and UN sanctions on Libya, Libya's isolation, fears of retaliation from the United States, internal discontent with the regime's policies, the rise of radical Islamism, lobbying in the U.S. Congress from American oil companies, the decision to definitively resolve the Lockerbie affair, and Libya's decision to forsake terrorism and — as of 2003 — to abandon weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. The objective of this paper is to provide an analysis of these factors.

HISTORY OF U.S.-LIBYAN RELATIONS¹

From 1954 to 1971, the United States enjoyed a lucrative presence in Libya through Wheelus Air Force Base, a vital link in Strategic Air Command (SAC) war plans for use as a bomber, tanker-refueling

and recon-fighter base. In return for the use of the airfield, impoverished Libyans received an average of \$2 million per year beyond other assistance the United States was already providing. From 1959, the date when Libya became an oil producer, until 1986, U.S. oil companies such as ESSO made considerable profits. The country's new wealth did not benefit Libyans at large, however, for the Libyan government led by King Idris I was not only authoritarian but also corrupt. On September 1, 1969, Colonel Muammar Qadhafi led the bloodless coup by a group of nationalist officers that ousted the frail 79-year-old king. The change of regime was of little concern to the United States because of Qadhafi's aversion to international communism, especially "Soviet imperialism." The first few years of Qadhafi's control of power gave every reason for Americans to be optimistic about the future of US-Libyan relations. However, as Qadhafi's son, Saif Aleslam Qadhafi, pointed out in 2003, "Trouble began...when the new government under the direction of Colonel Qadhafi, seeking to assert national independence, expelled American military bases from our territory."² The truth,

however, is that the loss of the Wheelus base in September 1970 (renamed Ukba ben Nafi Air Base) was insignificant, given that the development of nuclear missiles had made bomber bases less critical. The United States was much more interested in Libya's oil and the lucrative revenues it brought U.S. companies than in bases that were becoming largely obsolete. However, the optimism that U.S. officials displayed toward the Libyan regime soon faded. For the next three decades relations went from bad to worse. Qadhafi's Libya remained America's *bête noire* until 1990, when Iraq became the new focus of U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Although many U.S. officials would dispute this analysis, the origin of the hostile relations between the two countries had less to do with alleged Libyan support for terrorism than with other more fundamental disagreements concerning Libya's control of its natural resources, such as Qadhafi's decision in the 1970s to partially nationalize the country's oil wealth. Even though U.S. oil companies eventually resolved their differences with Libya, hostility between the two governments persisted until they normalized relations in 2004-05. The other sources of disagreement related to international political issues, ranging from Libya's support for Palestinian resistance groups to its close political and military relationship with the former Soviet Union. American policy makers viewed Libya as a "Soviet satellite"³ and Qadhafi as a Soviet puppet, depictions which, at the peak of the Cold War, made any country an enemy of the United States with all the consequences that resulted from such standing. Ideological differences were such that the Libyan leader almost always automatically supported govern-

ments and movements of national liberation that were on Washington's black list, while the United States did all it could to undermine the Libyan regime.

Hostile relations between Libya and the United States reached their pinnacle in the 1980s during the Reagan administration. Not only did the United States seek the overthrow of Qadhafi; it had also orchestrated attempts on his life.⁴ Reagan characterized Libya as an outlaw state,⁵ a precursor concept of the rogue-state doctrine carried out under the Clinton administration.

While the 1980s were marked by an extreme hostility that resulted in direct attacks by the United States — the bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi being the prime example — the Lockerbie affair and issues of terrorism dominated U.S. policy toward Libya. The Lockerbie bombing on December 21, 1988, was seen as Libyan retaliation for U.S. air strikes on Libya in April 1986. A year later, on September 19, 1989, the explosion of a French UTA airplane over Niger was also blamed on Libya by both the French and the British, who had conducted separate investigations. The UTA case was clearly the work of Libyan agents. However, although the three-year investigation of the Lockerbie attack pointed the finger at the Libyans, the case remained more controversial even after the conviction of two Libyans by a Scottish court in 1999. Apparently, there exist documents that demonstrate the involvement in the bombing of the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, led by Ahmed Jibril.⁶

The UTA and Lockerbie affairs abruptly ended a process of liberalization (*infatah*), mostly at the economic level, that the Libyan regime had undertaken in

the late 1980s in response to popular grievances, mismanagement of the economy, and the failure of adventures abroad, as well as annoyance from the immediate neighbors. However small those reforms (*islahat*) launched in 1987, they nonetheless indicated that the regime wished to change enough to preserve the political system and maintain the welfare state that benefited most Libyans.⁷ However, the emergence of armed Islamist groups in 1989, coupled with the UN- and U.S.-imposed sanctions in 1992, compelled Qadhafi to put an end to liberal reforms. Libyan refusal to hand over the suspects, while resting on valid legal grounds, stemmed also from fears that the suspects would put the blame for the bombing on Qadhafi himself. Furthermore, the Libyans were convinced that the real U.S. target was the Libyan regime; they were persuaded that the United States sought no less than the overthrow of Qadhafi and his replacement by the CIA-trained opposition.⁸

On April 5, 1999, Libya surrendered Abdel Basset Ali al-Meghrahi and Lamem Khalifa Fhimah to the United Nations to face trial in the Netherlands. Apparently, Britain assured Qadhafi that the evidence was only against Al-Meghrahi and Fhimah and not against senior members of the Libyan government. Kofi Annan announced that UN sanctions against Libya would be suspended and could be lifted after 90 days, as provided in UNSC Resolution 1192 (1998).⁹ The suspension of UN sanctions, however, did not imply that unilateral U.S. sanctions would also be suspended, let alone lifted. On the contrary, these would remain in force, according to James Rubin, because the United States wanted “additional concerns alleviated.”¹⁰

Why did Libya agree to hand over the accused at that particular moment? The many-sided answers to this question have relevance to all the subsequent decisions that Libya has made since the 1990s to normalize relations with the Western world, in general, and the United States, in particular. The deteriorating economic conditions were obviously an important factor. But there is no doubt that the U.S. and British decision to allow the trial to be held in a neutral country was the major factor that set in motion the extradition of the two Libyans. Of course, Qadhafi also hoped that the handing over of the suspects would result in the definitive lifting of sanctions and an end to Libya’s isolation.

GENESIS OF NORMALIZATION

Undoubtedly, the United States agreed to hold the trial in the Netherlands because support for U.S. policy toward Libya had eroded. In fact, the imposition of sanctions upon various countries, coupled with attempts to apply rules of extraterritoriality to foreign companies doing business with so-called rogue states, faced strong resistance abroad and was failing miserably. Under pressure from major business groups and anti-sanctions trade associations, members of Congress such as Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), and Representatives Lee Hamilton (D-IN) and Philip M. Crane (R-IL) worked on a proposed law. It would not do away with sanctions as a tool of foreign policy but would ensure that their adverse effects on the U.S. economy would be limited. For its part, the Executive Branch created a “sanctions team” to scrutinize the rationale, extent, cost and efficacy of sanctions already in place and seek to work out standards for the future.¹¹ In the dispute

over sanctions, Europeans won the fight; the United States gave waivers that would keep sanctions from being forced upon European companies doing business with Cuba, Iran and Libya. In exchange, the EU agreed to some restrictions.¹² Clearly, international support for sanctions was crumbling; there were complaints from abroad and from Clinton himself that the United States had become “sanctions happy.” British Prime Minister Tony Blair urged Clinton in spring 1998 to ease up on international sanctions. Progressively, U.S. officials had become aware that Clinton’s attempts to instigate an oil embargo on Libya would not elicit any support at the United Nations. Furthermore, the United States ran the risk of losing international support on sanctions against Libya at the UN Security Council. This would certainly have weakened the usefulness of international sanctions, in general. Undoubtedly, this development is what enticed the U.S. administration, under nudging from Egypt, South Africa and Saudi Arabia, to consider the Libyan proposal of having the Lockerbie trial in a third country.¹³

Libya expected that, once it had turned over the accused, there would be some softening of U.S. policy. A tripartite meeting between the U.S., Libyan and British representatives to the United Nations under the auspices of Kofi Annan took place on June 11, 1999. This meeting, initiated by the United States,¹⁴ marked its first official direct diplomatic contacts with Libya in 18 years — since diplomatic relations were severed in 1981 under the Reagan administration. The objective of the meeting was to clarify “the positions of their Governments regarding the requirements of the aforementioned Security Council resolutions for the lifting of mea-

asures imposed by the Council on the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.”¹⁵ In view of the fact that Libya, according to Annan, had declared that it “definitively renounces all forms of international terrorism of whatever origin,” observers anticipated that the United States would perhaps agree to a lifting of sanctions. U.S. officials admitted publicly that Libya had actually withdrawn from the terrorism business. They acknowledged, along with their Israeli counterparts, that Libya had expelled the notorious Abu Nidal organization and distanced itself from other “Palestinian extremist organizations opposed to the Middle East peace process.”¹⁶

It became obvious, however, that the United States had no intention of allowing UN sanctions to be lifted. Officials insisted that Libya had to fulfill other conditions: cooperate with the investigation and trial; pay appropriate compensation to relatives of the victims in the Lockerbie bombing; end and renounce all forms of terrorism; and acknowledge responsibility for the actions of Libyan officials. Obviously, from a Libyan perspective, it was unreasonable to impose such demands before a verdict had been rendered on the two accused.¹⁷ Regardless of the position of the other members of the Security Council, U.S. officials were steadfast on policy toward Libya. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk declared, “We are aware...that many Security Council members are anxious to close the chapter of Libya sanctions and might be prepared to accept Libyan assurances instead of actions. We are not... [We] are prepared...to veto a resolution lifting sanctions if it is presented before we are satisfied with Libyan actions.”¹⁸ Furthermore, the American government made it clear that unilateral

U.S. sanctions against Libya would continue. The only exception to the sanctions was commercial sales of food, medicines and medical equipment, which the administration introduced in May 1999 as a result of the sanctions reforms.¹⁹ In fact, U.S. officials made it plain that the exception to the sanctions — which had a positive effect on Iran, Sudan and Libya — was “not meant as a reward to Libya. It had its own track and its own dynamic. It wasn’t either speeded up or slowed down because of that.”²⁰ Libyan fears that the United States would not lift either the UN or the U.S. sanctions were well founded. Indeed, the United States resisted attempts to allow the lifting of UN sanctions. Disregarding the improved relations between Libya and the EU, including the United Kingdom, which in July 1999 reestablished diplomatic relations that had been broken since 1984,²¹ the United States threatened to impose its veto in the Security Council.²² In his testimony to Congress, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ronald E. Neumann recognized that, unlike the United States,

Much of the world has been quick to welcome Libya back into the community of nations. On the political front, a number of nations have re-established diplomatic relations, and Libya has become much more active in regional organizations. On the economic front, immediately following the suspension of UN sanctions proscribing direct air travel to and from Libya, foreign airlines opened direct routes to Tripoli. Foreign firms also welcomed Libya’s indications of interest in large infrastructure projects, including in the petroleum sector and aircraft purchases.²³

Neumann reiterated the four conditions that Indyk had stated a month earlier. Undoubtedly, the U.S. decision to maintain the sanctions infuriated the business community, as Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and other Europeans benefited from the situation. Even with Helms-Burton and the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA), the United States could not stop Europeans from investing in countries targeted by those laws, e.g., France’s Total, Russia’s Gazprom and Malaysia’s Petronas, which had a \$3 billion investment in Iran.²⁴ Albeit reluctantly, the United States provided a waiver to both laws²⁵ so that the deal could go forward without creating a major conflict with France, in particular, and with the EU, in general.

In autumn 1999, a policy shift toward Libya seemed to have occurred. The clearest signal came through Ronald Neumann, who, in a speech at the Middle East Institute, gave a more positive assessment of Libya.²⁶ Although he reiterated the various U.S. demands, Neumann recognized that the Jamahiriya (state of the masses) had taken important steps against terrorism: the expulsion of Abu Nidal and the closing of his training camps, visa restrictions on terrorists, opposition to Islamist extremists, and switching allegiance to Yasser Arafat from Palestinian rejectionists. The U.S. government interpreted support for Arafat’s Palestinian authority as Libya’s willingness to back the Middle East peace process. From Neumann’s perspective, “Libya’s reintegration into the international community will continue whether we like it or not, so long as Libya avoids new terrorism and blatant challenges to the international order.” The most important passage was his statement that change, though not imminent, can now

be imagined. The other significant statement was his assertion that, unlike its policy in Iraq, the United States does “not seek to maintain sanctions until there is a change of regime in Tripoli.” However, the deputy secretary raised two major concerns. The first relates to Libya’s “inflammatory rhetoric”: The “Libyan leadership may be fundamentally anti-American, that is, committed to opposing American interests and an American policy agenda simply because they are American.” The second U.S. concern was that “Libya continues to pursue programs for the acquisition of WMD and missiles, which would threaten U.S. interests.”

Mixed signals came from Washington with respect to Libya. While officials continued to acknowledge change in

Libya’s actions, they still labeled Libya a sponsor of terrorism, a term used since 1979. Most officials alleged that the sanctions had worked, resulting in Libya’s surrender of the two

accused. The impact of the sanctions, they alleged, was what forced the Libyans to abandon support for terrorism. Yet the administration continued to label Libya a “rogue state.” Important differences of views within the government probably explain the mixed signals that the United States was sending. Libya, for its part, endeavored to improve its political image internationally. It also provided incentives to foreign businesses and sought the return of American oil companies, which had lobbied the U.S.

government ceaselessly to lift sanctions on Libya. In February 2000, the U.S. government allowed four oil companies, Conoco — Occidental, Marathon and Amerada Hess — to dispatch agents to the Jamahiriya to inspect oil fields they had to forsake when the Reagan administration imposed sanctions on Libya in the 1980s.²⁷

Undoubtedly, some American officials were convinced that non-U.S. businesses were the main beneficiaries of the inevitable rehabilitation of Libya and that, unless some U.S. initiatives were taken, Europeans and others would flood the Libyan market. Beyond doubt, European firms were strengthening their presence in Libya, especially in the hydrocarbon sector, in anticipation of a U.S. return. As Jean-

Jacques Royant, in charge of International Cooperation at the Council of French Oil and Gas Suppliers, put it: “We are trying to get there [Libya] quickly. Everyone expects the U.S. administration to change its position [on sanctions against Libya]

In the Department of Defense, the urge to develop a National Missile Defense system needed justification: the potential near-term threat from “rogue states.”

after the American presidential elections in November.”²⁸ It is probably in this context that then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright authorized a four-member consular visit to Libya to evaluate safety conditions for U.S. citizens and to determine whether to lift the restriction on the use of U.S. passports for travel to the North African state,²⁹ which had been in place since December 11, 1981. Though a shift in policy was clearly in the making,³⁰ American officials continued to deny it. They

insisted that the consular visit had no relationship to the Libyans' extradition of the accused in the Lockerbie trial. For their part, the Libyans reiterated their wish to normalize relations as long as the United States respected Libya's full independence,³¹ which was no more than a rhetorical demand.

The Clinton administration aimed at normalizing ties with Libya, albeit very slowly. It tried to do so cautiously in order to avoid hurting the sensibilities of the families of the victims. The families were quite vocal and had strong support among members of Congress and among pro-Israeli media.³² This partly explains the administration's hesitant moves toward normalization. Yet some in Congress and in other departments of the Executive Branch, including the Department of State's Counterterrorism Bureau, headed by Michael Sheehan, staunchly opposed even those incremental moves.³³ Furthermore, in the Department of Defense, the urge to develop a National Missile Defense system needed justification. Defense Secretary William Cohen argued that the necessity for a Star Wars system was genuine because of the potential near-term threat from "rogue states." He insisted, "The intelligence shows that by the year 2005, the North Koreans, and then following that, the Iranians and possibly Iraqis or Libyans, would be in a position to have an intercontinental ballistic-missile capability that could threaten the United States,"³⁴ a far-fetched statement to say the least. Neumann's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 4, 2000, highlighted the difficulty for those in the administration who favored normalization with Libya. Neumann once again acknowledged the progress that Libyans

had made with respect to the issue of terrorism. However, he raised the bar very high by renewing U.S. demands: payment of appropriate compensation for the victims' families, acceptance of responsibility for the actions of Libya's officials, renunciation of and an end to support for terrorism, and cooperation with the Pan Am 103 investigation and trial. Paradoxically, he asserted, "On our key concerns — terrorism, opposition to Middle East peace and regional intervention — Libya no longer poses the threat it once did. On WMD and missiles, our efforts to impede Libya's programs have had substantial success." Yet, such assurances were not sufficient:

We will oppose lifting UN sanctions against Libya until we are satisfied that Libya has met all the relevant UN Security Council requirements. The provisions of the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act regarding investment in Libya's petroleum sector will continue to be considered until, as the statute prescribes, the president has determined and certified to Congress that the UNSCR requirements have been met. Also until that time, we expect to maintain core unilateral economic sanctions prohibiting US-Libyan business.³⁵

Although U.S. policy makers dropped the use of the rogue-state concept, the term they substituted for it, "states of concern," did not signal any change in policy.

LIBYA'S QUEST FOR NORMALIZATION

Libya's quest for normalization of relations with the United States began in

the early 1990s.³⁶ As seen earlier, Qadhafi had even proposed to turn over the two suspects in exchange for such normalization. A series of domestic and international factors compelled Libya to opt for cooperation with the United States. The Lockerbie affair itself, which was central to U.S. policy toward Libya, occurred in the midst of the chaotic transition in the Soviet Union, an important political friend.

The Domestic Front

The impact of the UN and U.S. sanctions, coupled with the repercussions of Libya's adventurous policies of the past, compelled the regime to review its practices. Although the sanctions were not as harsh as those imposed upon Iraq — Libya being able to sell its oil in the world market — there is no doubt that the Qadhafi regime faced undeniable economic difficulties. However, the sanctions were mostly felt among the population at large,³⁷ especially since that population had enjoyed very comfortable incomes compared to all their neighbors. The prices of consumer goods reached historic highs. The sanctions led not only to widespread discontent against elements of the regime who benefited from them because of their control over resources and over the population, but also to the strengthening and eventual radicalization of the Islamist movement.³⁸ While the regime effectively repressed the movement in the most brutal way,³⁹ there was fear that a civil war such as that in neighboring Algeria might happen in Libya. Furthermore, there was genuine alarm that a potential alliance between the Islamists and the disgruntled military could evolve into a potentially lethal force capable of ousting the Qadhafi regime.⁴⁰ Thus, the regime could ill afford to combat

enemies domestically and at the same time alienate its neighbors, let alone the only superpower on the world stage. Thus, in January 2000, Qadhafi, admitting the failure of the Jamahiriya and recognizing that the sanctions had allowed the development of widespread corruption, announced in front of the General People's Congress, "This system is abolished."⁴¹ Following the suspension of the UN sanctions, the regime decided to overhaul the country's infrastructure, which the government estimated required a \$35 billion investment for the period 2000-05. As Martinez rightly put it, "the economy was now conceived as a diplomatic weapon capable of overcoming the American embargo."⁴²

The International Front

The handing over of the two suspects in the Lockerbie trial brought dividends to the Qadhafi regime. Great Britain agreed to renew diplomatic relations, severed in 1984 following the lethal shooting of a policewoman, Yvonne Fletcher, from the Libyan embassy compound, provided Libyan authorities assisted in the investigation of the killing, which they effectively did. The Libyan government admitted responsibility for the killing by one of its agents and agreed to pay compensation to the family of the victim.⁴³ France, for its part, had also partially resolved its conflict over the bombing of UTA Flight 772 and resumed its lucrative commercial interests in Libya. Of course, the French were hoping not only to advance their economic interests, but also to entice the Libyan regime, faced with domestic Islamist guerrillas, to partake in the global war on terrorism. But, while relations with European powers such as Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Russia

improved considerably, no such development occurred in U.S.-Libyan relations. This was due primarily to opposition in the United States from the families of the Lockerbie victims, who constituted a powerful lobby inside the Congress. Thus, the United States extended ILSA for a five-year period and even imposed harsher sanctions, which were decried by Washington's European allies and Canada, as well as U.S. companies fearful that non-U.S. companies would reap the most gains from the lucrative Libyan hydrocarbons sector.

The most important objective for the Libyans was to bring closure to the whole Lockerbie affair and normalize relations with the United States. But, despite Libya's support for the United States following 9/11, American policy makers were unyielding.

LIBYA AND THE UNITED STATES POST-9/11

The verdict of the Lockerbie trial, far from ending U.S.-Libya differences, created potential for further conflict. On the eve of the verdict, Secretary of State Colin Powell made it clear that "regardless of the outcome that will be announced, ... there are other things that the Libyan government will be expected to do with respect to the other elements of the UN sanctions." Although admitting that the Libyans had supplied to the judge all the necessary information for the trial, Powell insisted that "there are sanctions that predate the UN sanctions that are not affected by the outcome of this trial."⁴⁴ In other words, even if the UN sanctions were lifted, U.S. unilateral sanctions would not be.

On January 31, 2001, the Scottish

judges found Abdel Basset Ali Megrahi guilty, while acquitting Lamem Khalifa Fhima. For U.S. oil companies and for Europeans, this verdict should have ended the Lockerbie affair and turned a page with Libya. For the United States, however, Libya not only had to accept responsibility for the act, but also to pay compensation to the families.⁴⁵ While Libya had made it known that it would compensate the families if the defendants were found guilty,⁴⁶ the Libyan state was quite reluctant to accept responsibility for the deed. Libyans believed that the end of the Lockerbie trial would lead to normalization with the United States, similar to what happened with France over the UTA 772 case. They called for a complete lifting of UN sanctions and made it clear that they sought normal relations with the United States.⁴⁷

The bombing of Iraq in February and July 2001 already gave an indication as to the Bush administration's policy toward "states of concern": force, not diplomacy, would drive U.S. foreign policy. The United States sought to use the January 2001 conviction of the Libyan official in the Lockerbie case to implicate the Libyan regime itself.⁴⁸ While seeking to maintain UN sanctions, Washington wanted the Libyan government not only to pay reparations to the families of the victims, but also to accede to other demands.

In April, concerns about U.S. energy security compelled Americans to review sanctions on Libya. Some members of the Bush administration, aware of the need for energy investments in Libya and Iran, were convinced of the ineffectiveness of sanctions and sought to influence Congress not to renew the ILSA for another five years. U.S. oil companies, too, lobbied the admin-

istration and Congress to allow them to renew their activities in Libya, Iran and Iraq. The pro-Israeli lobby and its allies, however, were intent on keeping the sanctions in place.⁴⁹ Though President George W. Bush sought a two-year extension of ILSA, on July 26, Congress, under strong pressure from the pro-Israeli lobby, overwhelmingly extended the sanctions for a five-year period. Under this law, the U.S. government can levy penalties on non-U.S. companies that invest more than \$20 million in Libya or Iran.

Libya had decided to cooperate with the United States in combating al-Qaeda even before the 9/11 attacks.⁵⁰ In fact, Libya had begun to use its acquaintance with terrorist groups to further its own state interests. In summer 2000, during the hostage crisis in the Jolo Island in the Philippines, Libya's mediation role was decisive in ending the hostages' ordeal; those hostages had been detained for months by the Abu Sayyaf organization. Libya also extradited hundreds of Islamist militants and suspected Islamist terrorists back to their countries of origin. For quite some time, those fighters had found shelter in Libya, where they could receive training in various camps set up for that purpose.⁵¹

Not surprisingly, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Libya was among the first countries to condemn the acts as "horrific and destructive," showed unequivocal understanding for the United States, called on Libyans to "donate blood" and assist relief efforts in the United States, and acknowledged the right of the latter to retaliate against the terrorists and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which harbored them.⁵² Qadhafi announced that he wished to "eliminate the common dangers of interna-

tional extremism and terrorism."⁵³ The Libyan government offered the services of its underground agents in the U.S.-led war on global terrorism.⁵⁴ Qadhafi even dispatched the head of Libya's external security, Musa Kusa, to hold meetings in London with Assistant Secretary of State William J. Burns and U.S. intelligence officials. Although the meeting was about the Lockerbie case, U.S. officials admitted that it was also an opportunity to seek intelligence.⁵⁵

Aware that the United States might attack countries that sheltered terrorist groups, even in the distant past, Qadhafi tried hard to dissociate his country from its support of terrorism in the earlier period and to normalize relations with the United States, an objective he had tried for years to achieve. Thus, he declared on August 31, 2002, in a speech celebrating the thirty-third anniversary of his seizure of power, "We must comply with international legality even though it's been falsified and imposed by the United States, or we will be slaughtered."⁵⁶

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, while demonstrating the irrationality of developing a national missile defense, had nevertheless created a golden opportunity for the United States to overthrow the "states of concern" that they suspected — rightly or wrongly — of harboring terrorists. Although in October 2001 no state besides Afghanistan had been linked to the attacks, there were, no doubt, forces in Washington that already contemplated the possibility of launching strikes against Iraq, Libya, Iran, Syria or even Lebanon, regardless of these states' unequivocal condemnation of terrorism.⁵⁷ Indeed, well-informed sources revealed that some forces in Washington,

especially among the neoconservatives, using the 9/11 attacks as a pretext, contemplated punishing Libya for its past deeds. Furthermore, active Libyan opponents in the United States lobbied the Bush administration for harsher measures against the Qadhafi regime.⁵⁸ Aware of such a possibility, the Libyan government kept a low profile and avoided any criticism of U.S. policies, even those pertaining to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the following years, Libya did its utmost to arrive at an arrangement with the United States concerning compensation of the Lockerbie victims' families, a *sine qua non* for the U.S. government to decrease the pressure on Libya.

Against this background, the Libyans, under Britain's auspices, entered negotiations with American officials in London on a variety of issues, including WMDs, normalization of U.S. relations with Libya and, more important, the lifting of U.S. sanctions. Thus, in May 2002, the Libyan government proposed the compensation of the victims' families, offering each family \$10 million, for a total sum of \$2.7 billion. This meant that each family would receive many times more than the \$170 million that France's victims' families of the UTA Flight 772 received from the Libyan government. The proposed scheme consisted of offering first \$4 million after the definitive lifting of the UN sanctions, another \$4 million following the termination of U.S. sanctions, and \$2

million once Libya was removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. The United States rejected this offer and demanded that Libya recognize its responsibility in the Lockerbie bombing.⁵⁹ This offer was reiterated by Qadhafi's son in spring 2003 in the article published in *Middle East Policy*:

Libya insists on Washington's stating explicitly that, following the settlement, it will permanently lift the barriers to Libya's normal relations with the outside world. This applies particularly to the United States itself. Libya must no longer be subject to an embargo.... Its name must be removed

from the list of states that sponsor terrorism. Its citizens must no longer be singled out for discrimination in obtaining American visas.⁶⁰

The first success of Libya's policy of rapprochement with the West through participation in the global war on terrorism was the non-inclusion in 2002 of Libya in President Bush's "axis of evil."

At the end, Libya officially recognized in April 2003 the civil — not criminal — responsibility of its officials in the Lockerbie bombing. In a letter submitted to the UN Security Council on August 15, 2003, Libya accepted "responsibility for the actions of its officials" in the Lockerbie affair. This resulted in the definitive lifting of UN sanctions a month later.⁶¹ From a Libyan perspective, the admission of civil responsibility was simply a way of ending sanctions and enticing the United States to normalize relations. As put by Foreign Minister Muhammad Abdul Rahman Chelgham, "The issue was not compensation,

but the purchase of the annulment of the sanctions.”⁶²

LIBYA AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

Objectively, the Libyan regime had already in 1998, through Interpol, warned the international community against the threat that al-Qaeda posed to the world.⁶³ The new Libyan attitude was helpful in sending a positive message with regard to the regime’s willingness to move away from support for terrorism abroad. Of course, this move also resulted in Libya’s obtaining outside support in the fight against its own Islamist opposition, for, eventually, the United States added one of Libya’s most radical factions, the Islamic Combatant Group, to the list of terrorist organizations.⁶⁴ There is no doubt that 9/11 constituted the real occasion that allowed Libya to progressively lose its pariah status. Libya’s professed expertise in the war against terrorist organizations and the amount of information that its authorities held about various foreign terrorist groupings became the strongest selling point for the Libyan regime. The ultimate objective, obviously, was the normalization of relations with the United States and improvement of relations with Europe that Qadhafi had been seeking since the mid-1990s. Thus, Musa Kusa, head of Libya’s intelligence, continued regular communication with European intelligence and counterterrorism agencies and offered to share information with them on various Islamist groups. In fact, because of the situation in its own neighborhood (Algeria, Egypt and Sudan), characterized by a strong Islamist presence and immigrants from South Asia and the Arab world on its soil, Libya held precious information on

various radical Islamist groups, including the so-called Arab “Afghans” and others associated with al-Qaeda. Given that Libya had detained arbitrarily and for long periods hundreds of individuals from Pakistan, Algeria, Sudan and Tunisia, the authorities were able to amass valuable data on various radical Islamist factions. Furthermore, the role that the Dawa Islamiyya played in the collection of information about various Islamist groups should not be discounted. Qadhafi’s son Sayf Aleslam’s “charity foundation,” which played a critical role in the resolution of the Jolo hostage crisis in 2000, assisted Western governments in dealing with some Islamist groups.

Probably the first success of Libya’s policy of rapprochement with the West through participation in the global war on terrorism was the non-inclusion in 2002 of Libya in President Bush’s “axis of evil,” which included North Korea, Iran and Iraq.⁶⁵ The Libyans proved their good faith by assisting the United States in the war on terrorism. The British government, for its part, began asking Libyans for their cooperation on intelligence about international terrorism.⁶⁶ Indeed, the Libyan authorities responded positively and provided intelligence on hundreds of al-Qaeda and other Islamist militants. Qadhafi, in the interview he granted *Newsweek*, admitted that “intelligence agencies in Libya and in the US are exchanging information.... There are Libyan terrorists in America and in Britain. The Libyan intelligence service exchanges information so that they will be wiped out.”⁶⁷ In an interview given to the *National Review*, Sayf Aleslam reiterated Libya’s engagement in the worldwide war on terror: “Libya has offered full coopera-

tion in the global war against terrorism. Don't forget that Libya, too, has been a victim of terrorist groups, some of which had their headquarters here in London along with other terrorist organizations from many different countries...," and that in the war on terrorism "we are doing our part."⁶⁸ The U.S. government, though still keeping Libya on its list of state sponsors of terrorism, had acknowledged in 2002 that "Libya appears to have curtailed its support for international terrorism."⁶⁹ Evidence of Libya's evolution was the signing of the twelve conventions on international terrorism.⁷⁰ In its quest for international rehabilitation and removal from the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism, Libya continued its full cooperation in the global war on terrorism. By 2003, it had provided intelligence on hundreds of al-Qaeda operatives and other jihadists.

The United States had basically recognized that Libya had moved away from the business of terrorism; however, it also wished to see Libya abandon its alleged WMD programs. This issue seemed to be the last hurdle for the normalization of relations, although the administration also expressed concern about human rights and democratic governance. As Ronald Bruce St John has demonstrated persuasively, Libya was ready to discuss the WMD issue as far back as 1992. Libya reiterated that willingness in 1999, but it was Washington that postponed such negotiations until the Lockerbie affair and the question of terrorism had been resolved.⁷¹ Those questions were more pressing than the unconventional weapons, which did not represent a threat.

While attention was focused on Iraq,

neoconservatives such as John R. Bolton, under secretary for arms control and international security, also pointed the finger at Libya, accusing it of developing chemical and biological weapons. Most of his accusations proved to be exaggerated and inaccurate.⁷² Most experts agree that Libya's WMD programs represented no real threat, consisting principally of chemical warfare agents that Anthony Cordesman described as "very low-quality weapons designs with poor fusing lethality."⁷³ Assertions that Libya was just a few years from becoming a nuclear-capable power proved totally groundless, even though Libya's nuclear program had been underestimated by the intelligence community. The head of the IAEA stated that Libya's nuclear program was years from producing a nuclear weapon and that important pieces of equipment were now largely dismantled and stored in boxes.⁷⁴ In any event, Libya had made it clear many months before its formal announcement on December 19, 2003, that it was willing to abandon all WMD programs and would open its sites to the IAEA, provided that the United States would not seek other pretexts for hostile policies toward Libya.⁷⁵ In fact, in September 2003, American and British inspectors had been given access to the covert sites of unconventional weapons.⁷⁶

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECRET DIPLOMACY

Unlike the triumphant neoconservative claim, Libya's decision to abandon its WMD programs was not the result of the war on Iraq. As pointed out earlier, Libya's desire to normalize relations with the United States began in the late 1980s. Libyans had been genuinely hopeful — and, as it turned out, naively optimistic —

that the end of the Reagan presidency and the election of George H.W. Bush, close to oil interests, would open an era of new opportunities for U.S.-Libyan relations. Thus, in early January 1989, Qadhafi called on the new Bush administration to engage in negotiations over disarmament. More important, he said that Libya was favorable to opening its weapons factories for inspection, provided other countries, including the United States and Israel, were willing to do the same.⁷⁷ These offers were followed by a variety of Libyan gestures to entice the United States to begin talks for the purpose of normalizing relations. The only Libyan demand was that those relations be based on mutual respect and without U.S. preconditions, a demand repeated by Libyans *ad infinitum* to this date. Unfortunately for the Jamahiriya, the new Bush administration had no intention of releasing pressure on Libya, seen as a major sponsor of global terrorism. Instead of welcoming Libya's overtures, the United States imposed more sanctions and sought to further isolate Libya diplomatically, politically and economically.

Despite unrelenting U.S. pressure, the Libyan regime continued to seek normal relations. In 1992, Libyan operatives approached former Senator Gary Hart (D-CO) to relay to the Bush administration their country's wish to establish constructive dialogue. Hart reported that "the Libyans said that they would turn over the two Pan Am bombing suspects... in exchange for a commitment... that preliminary discussions would begin within a reasonable period of time regarding the lifting of sanctions and eventual normalization of relations between our two nations."⁷⁸ Libyan attempts led nowhere, for

the United States was not interested in opening discussions, even if Libya surrendered the two suspects. Although Hart could not provide an explanation as to Bush's rationale for rejecting Libya's overtures, he did conclude that "this account suggests, and strongly so, only one thing: We might have brought the Pan Am bombers to justice, and quite possibly have moved Libya out of its renegade status, much sooner than we have. At the very least it calls into serious question the assertion that Libya changed direction as a result of our preemptive invasion of Iraq."⁷⁹ What Gary Hart probably knew, but would not say, is that the United States had no desire to engage in a dialogue because Libya was a "rogue state." Indeed, the rogue-state doctrine served a purpose: It allowed the United States to justify particular domestic (promoting defense programs) and international (isolating regimes opposed to U.S. hegemony) policies.⁸⁰

As a result of "sanctions fatigue" and failure to convince Europeans and others about the rationality of its policy toward Libya, the second Clinton administration shifted course and adopted a less stringent policy toward the Qadhafi regime. Libya's handing over of the two suspects worked favorably upon the new approach. Thus, in mid-1999, the United States opened secret talks with Libyan officials. As Martin Indyk reported in 2004, the talks in 1999 were made possible by Libya's acquiescence to U.S. conditions — that "Libya cease lobbying in the UN to [permanently] lift the sanctions"⁸¹ and that "the bilateral dialogue be kept secret."⁸² In their first meeting with U.S. officials in May 1999, "Libya's representatives [led by chief of intelligence Musa Kusa] were ready to put everything

on the table, saying that Mr. Gadaffi had realized that was not the path to pursue and that Libya and the United States faced a common threat from Islamic fundamentalism. In that context, they said, Libya would actively cooperate in the campaign against al-Qaeda and would end all support for Palestinian 'rejectionist' groups, endorse U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East and help in conflict resolution in Africa."⁸³ With respect to WMD, mainly the issue of chemical weapons, Libyan officials showed preference for a multilateral framework, consenting not only to open their facilities to inspection but also to join the Chemical Weapons Convention, a measure that Libya eventually fulfilled in January 2004. Three months later, Libya signed the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Libyans reiterated their offer on chemical weapons and agreed to participate in Middle East multilateral arms-control talks taking place at that time.⁸⁴ American officials admitted that they did not wish to pursue the WMD question; terrorism and the resolution of the Lockerbie case were their top priorities. Furthermore, Libya's chemical weapons did not represent an imminent threat, and the nuclear-weapons program was thought to be in its early stages. But, the United States did communicate to the Libyans that, even if the Lockerbie and terrorism issues were resolved, U.S. sanctions would not be lifted until after the WMD concern was satisfactorily settled. The secret talks were deferred until after the presidential election. U.S. officials believed that a potential leak of those talks at such a critical period would create a political scandal, especially at a time when the Lockerbie victims' families were awaiting a resolution to the tragedy.

With the conviction of the two Libyan agents in January 2001 and the upholding of the verdict by an appellate court hearing in March 2002, the Lockerbie case found some resolution, especially since the Libyans had promised to provide compensation to the victims' families should Libyan officials be found guilty. But this did not result in the permanent lifting of UN sanctions, let alone U.S. sanctions. In a joint communiqué issued on February 23, 2001, George W. Bush and Tony Blair "call[ed] on the Libyan government to comply with the requirements of relevant UN Security Council resolutions."⁸⁵ However, prior to that joint statement, Libyan, British and U.S. officials had met the previous month with Libya's permanent representative to the United Nations, presenting Libyans with a "script" pointing out "what they needed to do and say to satisfy U.S. requirements on compensating the families of the Pan Am 103 victims and accepting responsibility for the actions of the Libyan intelligence officers implicated in the case." They also laid out the steps that Libya needed to take in order for the UN sanctions to be definitively lifted.⁸⁶ Like other Arab regimes in the region, Libya used the 9/11 events as an opportunity to seek rapprochement with the United States through collaborating in the war on global terrorism and providing information on various jihadist groups. Despite a continued ambiguous posture on Libya, the Bush administration carried on the dialogue with Libyan officials that had been started by the Clinton administration. Ronald Bruce St John reported that in October 2002, Libyan Foreign Minister Muhammad Abdul Rahman Chalgham corroborated the fact that a number of meetings with U.S. officials had been held since January 2001,

with most of the discussions at the level of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs William J. Burns.⁸⁷

In March 2003, a few weeks before the United States invaded Iraq, Libyans sounded out the British government on talks with both the United States and Great Britain to discuss ways of dismantling Libya's WMD. Prime Minister Tony Blair confirmed that "Libya came to us in March [2003] following successful negotiations on Lockerbie to see if it could resolve its WMD issue in a similarly co-operative manner. Nine months of work followed with experts from the U.S. and UK, during which the Libyans discussed their programmes with us."⁸⁸

U.S.-LIBYAN RELATIONS SINCE '03

Following the announcement that Libya had given up its WMD programs, the White House and other members of the administration, despite Tony Blair's statement, were quick to claim credit, suggesting that it was the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 that convinced Qadhafi to give up unconventional weapons. This was echoed in articles in the U.S. press by pro-Israeli opinion makers, such as *New York Times* columnist William Safire.⁸⁹ These affirmations do not correspond to the facts;⁹⁰ however, it is interesting to analyze the reasons that elicited Qadhafi's decision on WMD. The Libyan leader explained in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Figaro* that the WMD program had been initiated a long time ago, when it was fashionable to engage in an arms' race. But, for him, the world has changed and so have coalitions; new challenges have emerged. Libya has to reconsider its programs:

If a country like Libya makes the nuclear bomb, what would it do with it? Furthermore, Libya ran the risk of launching itself in the production of weapons that were not up to its level.... And in which area would one use this weapon? In which theater of combat?... We don't have an enemy that is well-defined enough for us to be able to say, 'We will use this weapon against it.' Also, our program has created fears among our neighbors. Thus, the best decision, the most courageous decision, was to dismantle it.⁹¹

And by deciding to dismantle, Libya forced the international community to look at the sole credible nuclear power in the Middle East, Israel, which has not only nuclear but also chemical and biological capabilities.⁹² Furthermore, one should recognize that the Libyan leader was quite ingenious in trading what, after all, were obsolete WMD in exchange for the rehabilitation of the regime and the reinsertion of the country into the community of nations. In sum, the abandonment of the WMD programs paved the way for the ending of Libya's long-time pariah status.

Libya was also hopeful that by giving up its WMD programs, relations with Washington would improve considerably and open the door to close cooperation in different areas. Bush's statement on December 19, 2003, seemed to support such a prediction:

Leaders who abandon the pursuit of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and the means to deliver them, will find an open path to better relations with the United States and other free nations. With today's announcement by its leader, Libya has

begun the process of rejoining the community of nations. And Colonel Ghaddafi knows the way forward; Libya should carry out the commitments announced today.”⁹³

Yet, despite this major move, Libyans complained that the rewards were inadequate. A year after the decision, Qadhafi protested, “We were disappointed by the reaction of Europe, the United States and Japan. They haven’t really rewarded us for our contribution to world peace.”⁹⁴ More specifically, Qadhafi complained that Libya had not received guarantees as to its national security, i.e., that the international community should prohibit the use of nuclear or chemical weapons against the country that decided to abandon WMD. From his perspective, Libya had not obtained any assistance in transforming its military arsenal into civilian use. The state-controlled Libyan press had called on Israel immediately after the announcement of the decision on WMD to dismantle its own WMD arsenal.⁹⁵

The Libyans expressed their wish to see U.S. sanctions lifted no later than May 12, 2004, which would allow American oil companies to return to Libya and also see the release of \$1 billion in Libyan assets frozen in banks in the United States. Libyan prime minister Shukri Ghanim urged the IAEA, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as well as U.S. and British experts, to dismantle all Libyan WMD so Bush could convince the U.S. Congress to lift the sanctions swiftly.⁹⁶ The dispute between the IAEA and U.S. officials regarding who was really in charge of the dismantlement delayed the process. In the end, it was the United States, with British collaboration, that took charge of dismantlement of the WMD equipment and shipping it

to the United States.

Libya’s objective in seeing a speedy return of American oil companies was believed to be instrumental in fulfilling its ambition to double the production of its high-quality “sweet” crude from 1.5 million to 3 million barrels per day by 2010, a level that Libya surpassed in the 1970s. American oil companies, aware that the concessions in Libya were due to expire in 2005, lobbied the White House and Congress to see the sanctions lifted so they could return to Libya, where non-U.S. oil companies, mainly Spanish, French and Italian, were quite active. The immediate result of such lobbying was the visit Congress members made to Libya in late January 2004; the delegation met with Qadhafi, the prime minister and other dignitaries.⁹⁷ In February, the United States lifted travel restrictions to Libya for American citizens, and extended an invitation to Libya to open an interest section in Washington — the United States having already set up a diplomatic representation in Tripoli, ostensibly to oversee the work of its WMD inspectors. The lifting of the travel ban was obviously welcomed by U.S. oil companies, which could now travel to Libya to negotiate contracts. In March, Tony Blair visited Libya, followed by an important U.S. delegation headed by William Burns, as well as National Security Council officials to discuss the subsequent moves to deepen security, diplomatic and commercial relations.⁹⁸ The visit indicated U.S. willingness to normalize relations and “turn the page.” The Libyans did not hide their desire to attract foreign businesses and investments. Libya revealed that it needed about \$30 billion over the next 10 years to expand its oil sector; it also asked OPEC to allow it to increase Libya’s oil production

quota.⁹⁹ Libya boasts the world's eighth-largest — and third-largest in Africa — proven oil reserves, estimated at more than 36 billion barrels. Libya has suggested that, in fact, its potential is three times those reserves.¹⁰⁰

On April 22, 2004, President Bush partially lifted sanctions on Libya, a move that allowed American citizens to conduct business and invest in Libya. Most sanctions were finally revoked in September 2004; in exchange, Libya disbursed the second payment to the victims' families. But the United States refused to remove Libya from the list of states that sponsor terrorism. Although the annulment of U.S. sanctions has not resulted in the export of military equipment to Libya, it did not prevent European arms traders from turning to Libya for new opportunities. Indeed, in September 2004, the EU decided, nudged by Italy, to lift the arms embargo on Libya, allegedly to fight illegal immigration. The decision came into force on October 11, 2004. An Italian document indicated that "it was in the EU's interest to allow Libya to control efficiently its land and maritime borders by allowing Tripoli to acquire the necessary equipment to monitor its 2,000-kilometer coast, including naval ships, monitoring aircraft, and night-vision goggles."¹⁰¹ Undoubtedly, Libya was now vested with a new role, that of protecting Europe from illegal migrants. Furthermore, in view of recent developments in North Africa, particularly the fight against the presence of jihadists in the Sahel, it is quite likely that Libya will have a role to play within the context of the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI), whose purpose is to fight against al-Qaeda-linked groups in the region. Thus, General Charles

Wald, deputy chief of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), declared in April 2005 that the reestablishment of military relations with Libya would greatly assist the United States in its efforts to counter the forces of instability in North Africa.¹⁰² The integration of Libya in PSI is a matter of time, as Libya has already indirectly contributed to this structure. However, though the United States has not made any request for the use of Ukba ben Nafi Air Base, Libyans have argued that a U.S. military presence in Libya cannot be contemplated. A Libyan official interviewed in February 2006 stated bluntly, "We will never compromise our sovereignty to have someone back."¹⁰³

CONCLUSION

In the last decade, Libya embarked on a process of rehabilitation of its regime. In order to achieve that goal, Libya decided to mend fences with the United States. The collapse of the Soviet Union, a recognition of U.S. hegemonic power, international isolation and domestic factors (economic decline, the rise of a potent Islamist opposition, bankruptcy of the Jamahiriya system), compelled Libya to abandon many of its previous policies. The emergence of more pragmatic leaders, including Qadhafi's son, helped in paving the way for rational, realistic choices taken by the Libyan leadership to convince the United States, through the mediation of Tony Blair, to abandon America's longstanding hostility toward Libya and to persuade Washington that cooperation, rather than conflict, would be mutually beneficial. The decision to recognize the responsibility of its officials in the Lockerbie bombing, to compensate the families, abandon terrorism, join the global war on terrorism, completely dismantle

WMD, and promise to bring about domestic reforms, constituted the main factors in the rehabilitation of the country. The United States, aware of Libya's considerable oil wealth, as well as Libya's strategic location and the existence of potential bases — including the Ukba ben Nafi Air Base (formerly Wheelus) — could not keep Libya out in the cold much longer.

Muammar Qadhafi, whom Ronald Reagan had dubbed the “mad dog of the Middle East,” has now become not only a partner in the global war on terrorism but a potential ally capable of serving U.S.

interests in the region. However, this promising relationship will only strengthen Qadhafi's authoritarian regime. Regardless of U.S. rhetoric about democratization, good governance and human rights, realism will be the driving force of U.S.-Libyan relations. So far, the United States has shown far more interest in oil wealth, terrorism and investment opportunities. Libyan citizens, who have been the victims of one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world, will rightfully be skeptical about America's real intentions in the region.

¹ For detailed background on U.S.-Libya relations, see Ronald Bruce St John. *Libya and the United States—Two Centuries of Strife* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Yahia H. Zoubir, “Libya in U.S. Foreign Policy: From Rogue State to Good Fellow?” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 31-53.

² Saif Aleslam al-Qadhafi, “Libyan-American Relations,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 2003), p. 36.

³ Mahmoud G. El Warfally, *Imagery and Ideology in U.S. Policy Toward Libya, 1969-1982* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), p. 155.

⁴ Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Aborted 1983 Trap Set for Libyan Forces,” *The Washington Post*, July 12, 1987, pp. A1, A25. Bob Woodward, “CIA Anti-Qaddafi Plan Backed,” *The Washington Post*, November 3, 1985, p. A19. Seymour M. Hersh, “Target Qaddafi,” *The New York Times Magazine*, February 22, 1987, p. 74.

⁵ See, for instance, R.W. Apple, “U.S. Said to Hope Clashes Prompt Moves in Libya to Oust Qaddafi,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 1986, p. A8.

⁶ *Al-Bayan* (United Arab Emirates), cited in *Arabicnews*, April 16, 2001. In fact, discussions with various diplomats tended to corroborate that allegation.

⁷ On the reforms undertaken in the 1980s, see Dirk Vandewalle, “Qadhafi's ‘Perestroika’: Economic and Political Liberalization in Libya,” *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring 1991): pp. 216-31. Various panels organized at the Middle East Studies Association conference in the late 1980's included papers on liberalization in Libya.

⁸ Author's interviews with Libyan diplomats in the 1990s.

⁹ United Nations, Letter Dated April 5, 1999, from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/1999/378, April 5, 1999.

¹⁰ www.CNN.com, April 5, 1999; *Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 1999, p. A28; *Financial Times*, April 6, 1999, p. 12, and April 7, 1999, p. 11.

¹¹ Thomas W. Lippman, “U.S. Rethinking Economic Sanctions-State Dept. Team Weighs Costs, Impact of Trade Restriction,” *The Washington Post*, January 26, 1998.

¹² “U.S., EU Settle Dispute Over Trade Sanctions,” www.CNN.com (Web posted), May 18, 1998.

¹³ John Lancaster, “Compromising Positions; Susan and Daniel Cohen Feel Twice Victimized—Once by the Terrorists Who Killed Their Daughter over Lockerbie, and Once by the Government That Has Failed to Punish Those Responsible. But Maybe the Bureaucrats Have a Point,” *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2000.

¹⁴ *The Boston Globe*, April 8, 1999.

¹⁵ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 16 of Security Council Resolution 883 (1993) and Paragraph 8 of Resolution 1192 (1998), S/1999/726, June 30, 1999.

¹⁶ “Compromising Positions,” *The Washington Post*, July 9, 2000, op. cit.; see also, Adam Zagorin, “Why Libya Wants In,” *Time*, Vol. 155, No.12, March 27, 2000, p. 66. In 1998, the U.S. Government reported,

“There is no evidence of Libyan involvement in recent acts of international terrorism.” U.S. Department of State. Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1998.

¹⁷ “U.S. Policy Toward Iraq, Libya and Iran,” Speech at Middle East Forum by Bruce O. Riedel, special assistant to the president and senior director, Near East and South Asian Affairs, National Security Council, April 23, 1999. See also “US Breaks Ice with Libya,” BBC Online, June 12, 1999.

¹⁸ Martin S. Indyk, assistant secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. Testimony, House International Relations Committee. Washington, DC, June 8, 1999.

¹⁹ Stuart E. Eizenstat, under secretary of state for economic, business, and agricultural affairs, and Rick Newcomb, director of Office of Foreign Assets Control, Treasury Department Press Briefing on Economic Sanctions, Washington DC, April 28, 1999, Released by the office of the spokesman. Eizenstat explained that “Sales of food, medicine and other human necessities do not generally enhance a nation’s military capabilities or support terrorism.... Our purpose in applying sanctions is to influence the behavior of regimes, not to deny people their basic humanitarian needs.” This was obviously the result of pressure from people in Congress, such as Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), who pushed for the Sanctions Policy Reform Act of 1999 (S. 757).

²⁰ Eizenstat, *ibid.*

²¹ Warren Hoge, “New Libyan Cooperation Leads to Renewed Ties with Britain,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 1999. Libya recognized its responsibility in the killing in 1984 of policewoman Yvonne Fletcher outside the Libyan Embassy in London and agreed to pay compensation to her family. Furthermore, Libya cooperated with the British intelligence concerning the Irish Republican Army, which Libya had supported for many years. See “Compromising Positions,” *op. cit.*

²² Colum Lynch, “U.S. Threatens to Veto Lifting Libyan Sanctions,” *The Washington Post*, July 8, 1999; Farhan Haq, “U.S. Resists Move to Lift UN Sanctions” Inter Press Service, July 7, 1999. “U.S. Opposes Lifting UN Sanctions on Libya,” CNN Online, July 1, 1999.

²³ Ronald E. Neumann, deputy assistant secretary, Bureau of Near East Asia. Testimony before the House International Relations Subcommittee on Africa, Washington, DC, July 22, 1999.

²⁴ Susan Quinn, “Unilateral Sanctions Reform Debated,” *U.S.-Arab Tradeline*, September 18, 1998.

²⁵ Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Statement on “Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA): Decision in the South Pars Case” London, United Kingdom, May 18, 1998 As released by the Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State.

²⁶ Ronald Neumann, deputy assistant secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern affairs. Middle East Institute. Washington, DC, November 30, 1999. The speech can also be found in Ronald E. Neumann, “Libya: A U.S. Policy Perspective,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (February 2000), pp. 142-45.

²⁷ Colum Lynch and John Lancaster, “U.S. Considers Easing Restrictions on Libya,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2000, p. A29.

²⁸ William Emmanuel, “France: Interview-French Oil Services Firms Target Libya,” Reuters English News Service, March 28, 2000.

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman. Consular Visit to Libya. Press Statement by James P. Rubin, March 21 2000.

³⁰ Jim Hoagland, “Stealthy Shift on Libya,” *The Washington Post*, March 26, 2000.

³¹ “Libya: Foreign Minister Says Normal Ties with U.S. Possible,” Associated Press, March 28, 2000; see also, *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (in Arabic), March 28, 2000, p. 4.

³² See, for instance, Lawrence Kaplan, “Engagement Ring,” *The New Republic*, July 24, 2000. See the statement that the pro-Israeli Anti-Defamation League issued in New York on May 18, 1998: “Concerned by United States’ Intention to Waive Sanctions against Companies Doing Business with Rogue Nations.”

³³ Bill Nichols, “House Measure Would Loosen Embargo GOP Leaders Oppose Plan for Some Sales,” *USA Today*, June 15, 2000.

³⁴ Kenneth R. Bazinet, “Uphill Battle for Prez in Putin Talks,” *Daily News* (NY), May 29, 2000, p. 6.

³⁵ Ronald E. Neumann, deputy assistant secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Washington, DC, May 4, 2000. A senior U.S. official told this author following Mr. Neumann’s interview, “Congress does not understand our policy. They [congressmen] will not allow change in policy toward Libya. The families and their supporters are powerful.” Interview at Department of State, Washington, DC, May 5, 2000.

³⁶ For a good treatment of Libya's quest for normalization with the United States, see Ronald Bruce St John, "Libya Is Not Iraq: Preemptive Strikes, WMD and Diplomacy," *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (summer 2004), pp. 386-402.

³⁷ On the impact of the sanctions, see Tim Niblock. *'Pariah States' and Sanctions in the Middle East—Iraq, Libya, Sudan* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001), esp. pp. 60-92.

³⁸ The radicalization of the Islamist movement and its actions against the regime are detailed in Yahia H. Zoubir, "Libye: Islamisme radical et lutte antiterroriste," *Revue Maghreb-Machrek*, No. 184 (summer 2005), pp. 53-66. A slightly different version in English can be found in the Atlantic Council's Compendium, "Libya, Radical Islamism and the Global War on Terrorism," forthcoming.

³⁹ Zoubir, "Libye: Islamisme radical et lutte antiterroriste," op. cit.

⁴⁰ See Ray Takeyh, "Qadhafi's Libya and the Prospect of Islamic Succession," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (February 2002), p. 155

⁴¹ Cited in Luis Martinez, "Des Changements attendus en Libye," <http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org>, January 2004.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ See Ronald Bruce St John, "Libyan Foreign Policy: Newfound Flexibility," *Orbis* (summer 2003), p. 470.

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, Press Remarks with Mexican Foreign Secretary Jorge Castaneda Gutman. Washington, DC, January 30, 2001.

⁴⁵ President Bush said, "The United States government will continue to pressure Libya to accept responsibility for this act and to compensate the families." John Lancaster and Alan Sipress, "A Muted Victory against Terror," *The Washington Post*, February 1, 2001, p. A1.

⁴⁶ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 16 of Security Council Resolution 883 (1993) and Paragraph 8 of Resolution 1192 (1998), S/1999/726, June 30, 1999.

⁴⁷ See *International Herald Tribune*, February 1, 2001; Agence France Presse (AFP), January 31, 2001.

⁴⁸ Robin Wright, "While Bush Pushes to Hold Tripoli Accountable, Europe Practices Engagement," *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 2001.

⁴⁹ Peter Behr and Alan Sipress, "Cheney Panel Seeks Review of Sanctions. Iraq, Iran, and Libya Loom Large in Boosting Oil Supply," *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2001, p. A13.

⁵⁰ See Ronald Bruce St John, "Libya Is Not Iraq: Preemptive Strikes, WMD and Diplomacy," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (summer 2004), pp. 391-92.

⁵¹ High-level Algerian national security officials that the author interviewed in 1993-94 declared unequivocally that Libya supported terrorist groups who were smuggling arms into Algerian territory to fight the regime. It was not until 1995-96, when Libya itself was confronted with armed Islamist groups, that Qadhafi made a 180-degree turn and began handing over jihadists to the Algerian government.

⁵² Peter Slevin and Alan Sipress, "Tests Ahead for Cooperation on Terrorism; Several Countries on Blacklist Have Helped US, But Only Marginally So Far," *The Washington Post*, December 31, 2001; Donna Abu-Nasr, "Gadhafi. Seeks Image Makeover," *Washington Times*, November 28, 2001. See also, Yahia H. Zoubir, "The Maghreb States and the United States after 9/11: A Problematic Relationship," in Sigrid Faath, Editor, *Neue geopolitische Konstellation im Nahen Osten nach dem 11. September 2001* (Hamburg, Germany: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 2003), p. 177.

⁵³ Cited in Daniel Williams, "Gaddafi Seeks to End Hostilities with U.S. and Revive Economy Hobbled by Years of Sanctions and Isolation," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 2003, p. A13.

⁵⁴ William H. Lewis, "The War on Terrorism: The Libya Case," *The Atlantic Council of the United States Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (April 2002), p. 2.

⁵⁵ Slevin and Sipress, "Tests Ahead for Cooperation on Terrorism," op. cit.

⁵⁶ Cited in Agence France Presse (Tripoli), August 31, 2002.

⁵⁷ Edith M. Lederer, "Arab Nations Vow to Fight Terrorism," *The Washington Post*, October 3, 2001.

⁵⁸ Author's interviews with Libyan opponents of the regime based in Washington, November 2002. These opponents asked the Bush Administration to apply the same pressure that the administration exerted upon the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

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