



House of Commons
Foreign Affairs Committee

**Libya: Examination
of intervention and
collapse and the UK's
future policy options**

Third Report of Session 2016–17



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*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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The Foreign Affairs Committee

The Foreign Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its associated public bodies.

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Summary

In March 2011, the United Kingdom and France, with the support of the United States, led the international community to support an intervention in Libya to protect civilians from attacks by forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi. This policy was not informed by accurate intelligence. In particular, the Government failed to identify that the threat to civilians was overstated and that the rebels included a significant Islamist element. By the summer of 2011, the limited intervention to protect civilians had drifted into an opportunist policy of regime change. That policy was not underpinned by a strategy to support and shape post-Gaddafi Libya. The result was political and economic collapse, inter-militia and inter-tribal warfare, humanitarian and migrant crises, widespread human rights violations, the spread of Gaddafi regime weapons across the region and the growth of ISIL in North Africa. Through his decision making in the National Security Council, former Prime Minister David Cameron was ultimately responsible for the failure to develop a coherent Libya strategy.

Looking to the future, the United Nations has brokered the formation of an inclusive Government of National Accord (GNA). Stable government is the *sine qua non* for the resolution of Libya's ongoing humanitarian, migrant, economic and security crises. However, regional actors are currently undermining the GNA by flouting the United Nations arms embargo and using Libyan militias as proxies. The GNA is the only game in town. If it fails, the danger is that Libya will descend into a full-scale civil war to control territory and oil resources. The international community must support the United Nations and the people of Libya by uniting behind the GNA; the alternative is political fragmentation, internecine violence, economic collapse and even more human suffering.

Introduction

Libya from 1969 to 2010

1. In 2010, Libya was governed by the 68-year-old Muammar Gaddafi, who had seized power in a coup in 1969.¹ The 1969 coup overthrew the al-Senussi monarchy, which had been established under the auspices of the United Nations in 1951 uniting the three former Ottoman provinces of Tripolitania, Fezzan and Cyrenaica.² In the course of his 40-year dictatorship, Muammar Gaddafi led an autocratic regime which was responsible for a range of domestic human rights abuses and which exported terrorism internationally including to the United Kingdom.³ Libya's refusal to comply with a United Nations Security Council Resolution condemning and addressing its sponsorship of terrorism in the 1980s led to the imposition of sanctions and increased isolation from the international community in 1992.⁴

2. Libya began to normalise its international relations in the late 1990s. British-Libyan diplomatic relations were restored in 1999, when the Libyan Government accepted responsibility for the murder of PC Yvonne Fletcher in 1984 and handed over suspects in the Lockerbie bombing to the Scottish authorities.⁵ Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the Gaddafi regime, which faced its own threats from al-Qaeda linked groups, moved to improve its relations with the United States and the United Kingdom. In 2003, the Libyan Government compensated the families of the 270 victims of the Lockerbie bombing and abandoned its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, which led to the lifting of United Nations sanctions.^{6 7} The then Prime Minister Tony Blair travelled to Libya in 2004 to meet Muammar Gaddafi and to negotiate agreements on trade and on oil exploration.⁸ Libya's international rehabilitation continued in the late 2000s, when Muammar Gaddafi was selected to chair the African Union and addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York.⁹

Libya in 2010

3. The Libyan economy generated some \$75 billion of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010. This economy produced an average annual per capita income of approximately

1 His full name was Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi. He is often referred to as "Colonel Gaddafi" by the Western media. For consistency's sake, he is referred to as "Muammar Gaddafi" throughout this Report.

2 Libya was an Italian colony from 1911 to 1943.

3 [Q1](#) [Alison Pargeter]; Examples of Libyan-sponsored international terrorism include the murder of PC Yvonne Fletcher (1984), a nightclub bombing in West Berlin (1986), the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 (1988), the bombing of UTA Flight 772 (1989) and the supply of weapons and explosives to terrorist organisations such as the IRA and the Red Army Faction.

4 United Nations, [United Nations Security Council Resolution 748](#)

5 House of Commons Library, [UK relations with Libya, SN/IA/5886](#)

6 United Nations News Centre, [Security Council lifts sanctions against Libya imposed after Lockerbie bombing](#), 12 September 2003

7 In the 2000s, the Libyan Government compensated relatives of the Lockerbie bombing victims, relatives of the US victims of the 1986 Berlin nightclub bombing and relatives of the US victims of the UTA Flight 772 bombing. In July 2015, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee launched an inquiry into the role of the UK Government in seeking compensation for the victims of IRA attacks made possible by the provision of Semtex and other weapons by the Gaddafi regime. This Select Committee inquiry is ongoing.

8 These British-Libyan negotiations are commonly described as "the deal in the desert". They included a \$900 million exploration and production agreement between the Libyan National Oil Company and BP.

9 The Guardian, [UN general assembly: 100 minutes in the life of Muammar Gaddafi](#), 23 September 2009

\$12,250, which was comparable to the average income in some European countries.¹⁰ Libyan Government revenue greatly exceeded expenditure in the 2000s. This surplus revenue was invested in a sovereign wealth fund, the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA), which was conservatively valued at \$53 billion in June 2010.¹¹ The United Nations *Human Development Report 2010*—a United Nations aggregate measure of health, education and income—ranked Libya as the 53rd most advanced country in the world for human development and as the most advanced country in Africa.¹² Human rights remained limited by state repression of civil society and restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression.¹³

Civil war and military intervention

4. Beginning in Tunisia in December 2010, a series of protests against repressive regimes broke out across the Middle East and North Africa. Demonstrations began in Libya on 15 February 2011, when anti-Gaddafi protests erupted in Benghazi. By the end of February 2011, the Gaddafi regime had lost control of a significant part of Libya, including the major cities of Misrata and Benghazi.

5. In March 2011, pro-Gaddafi forces launched a counter-offensive against the rebels that reached the outskirts of Benghazi. On 12 March, the Arab League called on the United Nations Security Council to take the necessary measures to “impose immediately a no-fly zone” over Libya.¹⁴ In response, the United Nations Security Council agreed Resolution 1973 on 17 March, which authorised member states to establish and enforce a no-fly zone over Libya and to use “all necessary measures” to prevent attacks on civilians.¹⁵ A coalition of nations including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, Qatar, Spain, United Arab Emirates, UK and USA contributed military assets to enforce Resolution 1973. Parliament approved the UK's participation in the military intervention following a debate on 21 March 2011 by a vote of 557 to 13.

6. Military action commenced on 19 March 2011, when the coalition targeted Libyan air defences and military targets with aircraft and missiles. NATO assumed command of all coalition military operations in relation to Libya as part of NATO Operation Unified Protector on 31 March 2011.¹⁶ Between March and October 2011, regime loyalists fought militias aligned with the opposition National Transitional Council (NTC) in a civil war which extended across Libya. The NTC forces were supported by NATO air power, which facilitated their combat performance.¹⁷ By the end of August 2011, NTC affiliated forces were largely in control of Tripoli and other cities.¹⁸ The United Nations recognised the NTC as Libya's governing authority on 16 September 2011. Muammar Gaddafi was killed after being captured on 20 October 2011, and the NTC declared the liberation of Libya and the official end of the war on 23 October 2011. NATO Operation Unified Protector ended on 31 October 2011.¹⁹

10 The World Bank, [World Development Indicators - Libya](#)

11 The Wall Street Journal, [Libya's Goldman Dalliance Ends in Losses, Acrimony](#), 31 May 2011

12 United Nations, [Human Development Report 2010](#), Table 1

13 Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2011: Libya](#)

14 Arab League, [Resolution 7360](#), 12 March 2011

15 United Nations, [Security Council Resolution 1973](#)

16 NATO, [Chair's statement London Conference on Libya](#), 29 March 2011

17 [Q318](#)

18 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [LIB013](#), para 3

19 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [LIB013](#), para 5

General National Congress

7. In late 2011, the NTC appointed a Transitional Government, which was charged with overseeing elections, which were generally regarded as free and fair, to a new democratic assembly, the General National Congress (GNC).²⁰ Despite fighting between militias in the first half of 2012, elections took place on 7 July 2012 with turnout of more than 60%.²¹ The GNC assembled on 8 August 2012 and appointed a Government in December 2012. However, the GNC Government was unable to project state authority and security across the whole of Libya.²² As a result, armed Libyan groups, including former Libyan military forces, Islamist, tribal and other militias, engaged in increasingly violent clashes, which resulted in significant civilian casualties in Benghazi in June 2013 and in Tripoli in November 2013.²³

House of Representatives

8. On 25 June 2014, elections were held to the House of Representatives (HOR), the successor assembly to the GNC whose mandate had expired. Turnout was estimated at 18%.²⁴ Following the election, fighting escalated in Tripoli and Benghazi, which forced the newly elected HOR to meet in the eastern city of Tobruk rather than in Tripoli. Some GNC Members refused to accept the legitimacy of the HOR and re-established the GNC as a rival legislative authority in Tripoli. In 2014, two rival Prime Ministers and Governments emerged, with the HOR Government based in Tobruk and the GNC Government based in Tripoli. Key state institutions remained in Tripoli, which led the HOR Government to create its own parallel institutions in Tobruk. Fighting between militias linked to the HOR and the GNC continued throughout late 2014 and early 2015.²⁵

Government of National Accord

9. In 2015, the United Nations Special Representative to Libya, Bernardino León, who was appointed in August 2014, brought together elements from the HOR and the GNC to begin to negotiate the formation of a Government of National Accord (GNA). The GNA was intended to serve as the sole legitimate Government of Libya. Martin Kobler replaced Bernardino León as United Nations Special Representative to Libya in November 2015. The Libyan Political Agreement, which set out the road map towards the formation of the GNA, was signed in Skhirat, Morocco, on 17 December 2015.²⁶ When we visited North Africa in March 2016 [see paragraph 13], we observed the UN team under Martin Kobler effectively co-ordinating its work with the P5 Ambassadors. We noted that the P5 Governments appeared content to leave the delivery of the Libyan Political Agreement to Martin Kobler's UN team and their respective Ambassadors. We witnessed the UK Ambassador playing a particularly active and constructive role. The GNA moved to Tripoli and took control of some Government Ministries on 30 March 2016.²⁷

20 [Q37](#)

21 [FCO \(LIB013\)](#) para 7

22 [FCO \(LIB013\)](#) para 9

23 [FCO \(LIB013\)](#) para 11

24 [FCO \(LIB013\)](#) para 12

25 [FCO \(LIB013\)](#) para 14

26 UNSMIL, [Libyan Political Agreement](#), 17 December 2015

27 [FCO, Foreign Secretary statement on Libya](#), 30 March 2016

Libya in 2016

10. In 2014, the most recent year for which reliable figures are available, Libya generated \$41.14 billion of gross domestic product and the average Libyan's annual income had decreased from \$12,250 in 2010 to \$7,820.²⁸ Since 2014, Libya's economic predicament has reportedly deteriorated. Libya is likely to experience a budget deficit of some 60% of GDP in 2016. The requirement to finance that deficit is rapidly depleting net foreign reserves, which halved from \$107 billion in 2013 to \$56.8 billion by the end of 2015. Production of crude oil fell to its lowest recorded level in 2015, while oil prices collapsed in the second half of 2014. Inflation increased to 9.2% driven by a 13.7% increase in food prices including a fivefold increase in the price of flour.²⁹ The United Nations ranked Libya as the world's 94th most advanced country in its 2015 index of human development, a decline from 53rd place in 2010.³⁰

11. In 2016, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that out of a total Libyan population of 6.3 million, 3 million people have been impacted by the armed conflict and political instability, and that 2.4 million people require protection and some form of humanitarian assistance.³¹ In its *World Report 2016*, Human Rights Watch stated that Libya is

heading towards a humanitarian crisis, with almost 400,000 people internally displaced and increasing disruption to basic services, such as power and fuel supplies. Forces engaged in the conflict continued with impunity to arbitrarily detain, torture, unlawfully kill, indiscriminately attack, abduct and disappear, and forcefully displace people from their homes. The domestic criminal justice system collapsed in most parts of the country, exacerbating the human rights crisis.³²

12. People-trafficking gangs exploited the lack of effective government after 2011, making Libya a key transit route for illegal migration into Europe and the location of a migrant crisis.³³ In addition to other extremist militant groups, ISIL emerged in Libya in 2014, seizing control of territory around Sirte and setting up terrorist training centres. Human Rights Watch documented unlawful executions by ISIL in Sirte of at least 49 people by methods including decapitation and shooting.³⁴ The civil war between west and east has waxed and waned with sporadic outbreaks of violence since 2014. In April 2016, United States President Barack Obama described post-intervention Libya as a "shit show".³⁵ It is difficult to disagree with this pithy assessment.

Foreign Affairs Committee inquiry

13. We launched our inquiry, "*Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the United Kingdom's future policy options*", with a call for written evidence in July 2015. We conducted eight oral evidence sessions between October 2015 and February 2016. We

28 The World Bank, [World Development Indicators - Libya](#)

29 The World Bank, [Libya's Economic Outlook - Spring 2016](#)

30 United Nations, [Human Development Report 2015](#), Table A1

31 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [Global Humanitarian Overview 2016](#), p23

32 Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016](#), Libya Events of 2015

33 FCO ([LIB0012](#)) para 1

34 Human Rights Watch, "[We Feel We Are Cursed](#)" Life under ISIS in Sirte, Libya, 18 May 2016

35 The Atlantic, [The Obama Doctrine](#), April 2016

heard from former Prime Minister right hon. Tony Blair, former Foreign Secretary right hon. Lord Hague of Richmond, former Defence Secretary right hon. Dr Liam Fox MP, former Department for International Development Minister right hon. Sir Alan Duncan MP, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Tobias Ellwood MP, former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Richards of Herstmonceux, UK Special Envoy to Libya Jonathan Powell, HM Ambassador to Libya Mr Peter Millett, former HM Ambassador to Libya Sir Dominic Asquith, civil servants, academics, analysts and journalists.³⁶ We also met a range of Libyan politicians and civil servants. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to provide evidence to our inquiry.

14. The Foreign Affairs Committee appointed Professor Toby Dodge, London School of Economics, as a Specialist Adviser at the start of the 2015 Parliament to provide ongoing advice on events in the Middle East.³⁷ In addition, we engaged Joseph Walker-Cousins, the former Head of the British Embassy Office in Benghazi, to act as Specialist Adviser for this particular inquiry.³⁸ We thank both Specialist Advisers for their input.

15. We heard from all but one of the key British protagonists involved in the decision to intervene in Libya in 2011. We invited the then Prime Minister right hon. David Cameron MP to provide oral evidence to our inquiry in March 2016. He declined this invitation citing “the pressures on his diary”. He pointed out that “the Foreign Secretary and other relevant parts of Government have provided the Committee with a good deal of written and oral evidence”.³⁹

16. We visited North Africa in March 2016, when we met Libyan politicians and technocrats, many of whom were temporarily based in Tunis, along with Egyptian and Tunisian politicians and policymakers. We wanted to visit Libya to assess the situation for ourselves and to hear from ordinary Libyans. However, we were unable to visit Tripoli, Benghazi, Tobruk or anywhere else in Libya due to the collapse of internal security and the rule of law. We would like to thank HM Ambassador to Egypt John Casson, HM Ambassador to Tunisia Hamish Cowell, HM Ambassador to Libya Peter Millett and their respective teams for taking the time to facilitate our visit.

36 In July 2016, Dr Liam Fox MP was appointed Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, and Sir Alan Duncan MP was appointed Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

37 On 8 September 2015, Professor Toby Dodge made the following declaration of interests following his appointment as Specialist Adviser to the Foreign Affairs Committee: London School of Economics and Political Science: Director of the Middle East Centre at LSE from September 2013 to present. The Middle East Centre is funded by two endowments, one from the Aman Charitable Trust and one from the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy. Kuwait Professor and Director of the Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States at LSE from October 2014 to present: The Kuwait Professor and the Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States is funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science. International Institute for Strategic Studies: Senior Consulting Fellow for the Middle East at the International Institute for Strategic Studies since October 2003. United States Government: March and April 2007 and March and April 2008: Adviser to General David Petraeus, Commander Multinational Forces Iraq, and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, US Ambassador to Iraq. Foreign Affairs Committee, [Formal Minutes 2015-16](#).

38 On 17 November 2015, Joseph Walker-Cousins made the following declaration of interests following his appointment as Specialist Adviser to the Foreign Affairs Committee for the Libya inquiry: Director, Middle East Business Development and Libya Country Manager, KBR UK Ltd; Member, Libyan British Business Council; Staff Officer, MENA Region, British Army Reserve; Independent Adviser to the English Court (commissioned for the court through Mischon de Reya). Foreign Affairs Committee, [Formal Minutes 2015-16](#).

39 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Prime Minister to FAC Chair](#), 25 April 2016

1 Intervention

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973

17. France, Lebanon and the UK proposed Resolution 1973 in the United Nations Security Council with the support of the United States. On 17 March 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Gabon, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, South Africa and permanent Security Council members France, the UK and the United States voted in favour of the resolution. Brazil, Germany, India and permanent Security Council members China and Russia abstained. No Security Council member state opposed the resolution.⁴⁰ Resolution 1973 authorised member states to establish and enforce a no-fly zone over Libya and to use “all necessary measures” to prevent attacks on civilians.⁴¹ It neither explicitly authorised the deployment of ground forces nor addressed the questions of regime change and of post-conflict reconstruction.

France

18. We were told that the political momentum to propose Resolution 1973 began in France.⁴² France sustained its push for international action in relation to Libya throughout February and March 2011. For example, former Defence Secretary Dr Fox MP explained how France accelerated progress towards Resolution 1973 by recognising the National Transitional Council as the legitimate Government of Libya in March 2011.⁴³ Former French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, who introduced Resolution 1973, asserted in his speech to the Security Council that “the situation on the ground is more alarming than ever, marked by the violent re-conquest of cities”. He stressed the urgency of the situation, arguing that “We have very little time left—perhaps only a matter of hours.”⁴⁴ Subsequent analysis suggested that the immediate threat to civilians was being publicly overstated and that the reconquest of cities had not resulted in mass civilian casualties [see paragraphs 31 to 37].

19. Looking beyond the arguments advanced in the United Nations Security Council, other factors in addition to civilian protection appeared to influence French policy. Libyan exiles based in France were influential in raising fears about a possible massacre in Benghazi. Visiting Professor at King’s College London, Professor George Joffé, told us that “the decisions of President Sarkozy and his Administration were driven by Libyan exiles getting allies within the French intellectual establishment who were anxious to push for a real change in Libya.”⁴⁵

20. A further insight into French motivations was provided in a freedom of information disclosure by the United States State Department in December 2015. On 2 April 2011, Sidney Blumenthal, adviser and unofficial intelligence analyst to the then United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, reported this conversation with French intelligence officers to the Secretary of State:

40 United Nations, [Security Council Approves ‘No-Fly Zone’ over Libya](#), 17 March 2011

41 United Nations Security Council, [Resolution 1973](#), 17 March 2011

42 [Q4; Q233](#) [Dr Fox]

43 [Q150](#)

44 United Nations, [Security Council Approves ‘No-Fly Zone’ over Libya](#), 17 March 2011

45 [Q4](#)

According to these individuals Sarkozy's plans are driven by the following issues:

- a. A desire to gain a greater share of Libya oil production,
- b. Increase French influence in North Africa,
- c. Improve his internal political situation in France,
- d. Provide the French military with an opportunity to reassert its position in the world,
- e. Address the concern of his advisors over Qaddafi's long term plans to supplant France as the dominant power in Francophone Africa.⁴⁶

The sum of four of the five factors identified by Sidney Blumenthal equated to the French national interest. The fifth factor was President Sarkozy's political self-interest.

21. Intervention in Libya was initially popular in France. A poll by IFOP reported that 66% of the French public approved of the intervention in April 2011.⁴⁷ Commentators have speculated about the extent to which possible electoral gains influenced decisions taken by the former French President in the year before his failed re-election campaign.⁴⁸ One commentator argued that "Sarkozy's main rival is not Gaddafi, but rather Marine Le Pen".⁴⁹ Another observed that President Sarkozy was eager to present himself as proactive in the Mediterranean and in addressing French concerns over illegal immigration to Europe from North Africa.⁵⁰

22. The UK was the second country after France to call on the United Nations to impose a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians. Former Foreign Secretary Lord Hague of Richmond observed that "President Sarkozy and his Government were very determined about this from the outset".⁵¹ Lord Hague confirmed that the new British strategy in relation to Libya was formulated as events developed "from the beginning of the fighting in Libya."⁵²

23. France led the international community in advancing the case for military intervention in Libya in February and March 2011. UK policy followed decisions taken in France.

United States

24. Dr Fox told us that "the US were quite reticent about getting involved militarily and tying up assets in a Libyan campaign."⁵³ Lord Hague added that "there were divisions in the American Government" and that the UK and France influenced the United States to

46 US Department of State, [H: France's client and Q's gold. Sid](#), 2 April 2011, C05779612

47 The New York Times, [Libyan War Not a Sure Thing to Save Sarkozy](#), 11 April 2011

48 The Economist, [Sarkozy relaunched](#), 24 March 2011

49 Gatestone Institute, [Why France Was So Keen to Attack Libya](#), 23 March 2011

50 The Week, [Why Sarkozy is so keen to bomb Gaddafi](#), 11 March 2011

51 [Q270](#)

52 [Q149](#)

53 [Q233](#)

support Resolution 1973.⁵⁴ Before the United States joined the coalition of nations willing to intervene in Libya, France and the UK argued that the international community should simply impose a no-fly zone. Former US Ambassador to NATO, Ivo Daalder, pointed out:

Cameron and Sarkozy were the undisputed leaders, in terms of doing something. The problem was that it wasn't really clear what that something was going to be. Cameron was pushing for a no-fly zone, but in the US there was great scepticism. A no-fly zone wasn't effective in Bosnia, it wasn't effective in Iraq, and probably wasn't going to be effective in Libya. When President Obama was confronted with the argument for a no-fly zone, he asked how this was going to be effective. Gaddafi was attacking people. A no-fly zone wasn't going to stop him. Instead, to stop him we would need to bomb his forces attacking people.⁵⁵

The United States was instrumental in extending the terms of Resolution 1973 beyond the imposition of a no-fly zone to include the authorisation of “all necessary measures” to protect civilians.⁵⁶ In practice, this led to the imposition of a ‘no-drive zone’ and the assumed authority to attack the entire Libyan Government command and communications network.

The evidence base: intelligence

25. We questioned whether the UK Government had reliable intelligence on what was happening on the ground in Libya in February 2011 to inform its new policy. Former Ambassador to Libya Sir Dominic Asquith told us that “the database of knowledge in terms of people, actors and the tribal structure—the modern database, not the inherited historical knowledge—might well have been less than ideal.”⁵⁷ Professor Joffé noted “the relatively limited understanding of events” and that “people had not really bothered to monitor closely what was happening”.⁵⁸

26. Alison Pargeter, analyst and author, expressed her shock at the lack of awareness in Whitehall of the “history and regional complexities” of Libya.⁵⁹ She argued that this lack of insight led to the failure to ask the key question why the rebellion was happening in Benghazi but not in Tripoli and to consider the significance of regional and tribal factors. For example, we noted that in a country with 6 million inhabitants, some 15,000 rebels were fighting around Benghazi and a similar number were engaged in the west.⁶⁰ Our wider analysis and evidence gathering led us to conclude that the UK's understanding of Libya before February 2011 was constrained by both resources and the lack of in-country networks for UK diplomats and others to draw on.

27. Intelligence on the extent to which extremist militant Islamist elements were involved in the anti-Gaddafi rebellion was inadequate. Former Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Richards of Herstmonceux confirmed that intelligence on the composition of the rebel militias was not “as good as one would wish.” He observed that “We found it quite difficult

54 [Q273](#)

55 Michael Ashcroft and Isabel Oakeshott, *Call me Dave*, p435

56 [Q275](#) [Lord Hague]

57 [Q88](#)

58 [Q3](#)

59 [Q5](#)

60 Joseph Walker-Cousins ([LIB0008](#)) para 2

to get the sort of information you would expect us to get.”⁶¹ We asked Lord Richards whether he knew that Abdelhakim Belhadj and other members of the al-Qaeda affiliated Libyan Islamic Fighting Group were participating in the rebellion in March 2011. He replied that that “was a grey area”.⁶² He added that “a quorum of respectable Libyans were assuring the Foreign Office” that militant Islamist militias would not benefit from the rebellion.⁶³ He acknowledged that “with the benefit of hindsight, that was wishful thinking at best.”⁶⁴

28. The possibility that militant extremist groups would attempt to benefit from the rebellion should not have been the preserve of hindsight. Libyan connections with transnational militant extremist groups were known before 2011, because many Libyans had participated in the Iraq insurgency and in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda.⁶⁵

29. We asked Dr Fox whether he was aware of any assessment of the extent to which the rebellion involved militant Islamist elements. He replied that he did not “recall reading anything of that nature.”⁶⁶ It is now clear that militant Islamist militias played a critical role in the rebellion from February 2011 onwards. They separated themselves from the rebel army, refused to take orders from non-Islamist commanders and assassinated the then leader of the rebel army, Abdel Fattah Younes.⁶⁷

30. Lord Hague also acknowledged the lack of reliable intelligence. He argued in mitigation that Muammar Gaddafi’s intelligence service “did not understand the militias, the tribes, the movements and what was happening in their own country, so there is not much hope that a foreign intelligence service would have a more profound understanding.”⁶⁸ However, Muammar Gaddafi’s actions in February and March 2011 demonstrated an appreciation of the delicate tribal and regional nature of Libya that was absent in UK policymaking. In particular, his forces did not take violent retribution against civilians in towns and cities on the road to Benghazi. Alison Pargeter told us that any such reprisals would have “alienated a lot of the tribes in the east of Libya” on which the Gaddafi regime relied.⁶⁹

The evidence base: rhetoric

31. Given the lack of reliable intelligence, both Lord Hague and Dr Fox highlighted the impact of Muammar Gaddafi’s rhetoric on their decision-making. Dr Fox cited “Gaddafi’s 70-minute diatribe on TV against his own people—if you remember, he was talking about how he was going to repeat some of the crimes of history, praising Tiananmen Square, Waco and the destruction of Fallujah, and saying that he was going to visit this on Benghazi.”⁷⁰ Lord Hague told us that

their stated intention, from Gaddafi himself, was to go house to house, room to room, exacting their revenge on the people of Benghazi...It would be a brave

61 [Q333](#)

62 [Q342](#)

63 [Q342](#)

64 [Q342](#)

65 The New York Times, [Iraq Then Libya Now](#), 13 March 2011. On a per capita basis, Libya provided more foreign fighters to the Iraq insurgency than any other part of the Arab world.

66 [Q244](#)

67 [Q29](#); Joseph Walker-Cousins ([LIB008](#)) para 11

68 [Q152](#)

69 [Q1](#)

70 [Q150](#)

assumption, given the history of Gaddafi, the situation and the disposition of forces, that his army would drive into Benghazi and they would all behave like pussycats. A lot of people were going to die.⁷¹

The evidence base: our assessment

32. Despite his rhetoric, the proposition that Muammar Gaddafi would have ordered the massacre of civilians in Benghazi was not supported by the available evidence. The Gaddafi regime had retaken towns from the rebels without attacking civilians in early February 2011.⁷² During fighting in Misrata, the hospital recorded 257 people killed and 949 people wounded in February and March 2011. Those casualties included 22 women and eight children.⁷³ Libyan doctors told United Nations investigators that Tripoli's morgues contained more than 200 corpses following fighting in late February 2011, of whom two were female.⁷⁴ The disparity between male and female casualties suggested that Gaddafi regime forces targeted male combatants in a civil war and did not indiscriminately attack civilians. More widely, Muammar Gaddafi's 40-year record of appalling human rights abuses did not include large-scale attacks on Libyan civilians.⁷⁵

33. On 17 March 2011, Muammar Gaddafi announced to the rebels in Benghazi, "Throw away your weapons, exactly like your brothers in Ajdabiya and other places did. They laid down their arms and they are safe. We never pursued them at all."⁷⁶ Subsequent investigation revealed that when Gaddafi regime forces retook Ajdabiya in February 2011, they did not attack civilians.⁷⁷ Muammar Gaddafi also attempted to appease protesters in Benghazi with an offer of development aid before finally deploying troops.⁷⁸

34. Professor Joffé told us that

the rhetoric that was used was quite blood-curdling, but again there were past examples of the way in which Gaddafi would actually behave. If you go back to the American bombings in the 1980s of Benghazi and Tripoli, rather than trying to remove threats to the regime in the east, in Cyrenaica, Gaddafi spent six months trying to pacify the tribes that were located there. The evidence is that he was well aware of the insecurity of parts of the country and of the unlikelihood that he could control them through sheer violence. Therefore, he would have been very careful in the actual response...the fear of the massacre of civilians was vastly overstated.⁷⁹

Alison Pargeter concurred with Professor Joffé's judgment on Muammar Gaddafi's likely course of action in February 2011. She concluded that there was no "real evidence at that time that Gaddafi was preparing to launch a massacre against his own civilians."⁸⁰

71 [Q157](#)

72 [Q1](#) [Alison Pargeter]

73 Human Rights Watch, [Libya: Government attacks in Misrata kill civilians](#), April 2011

74 Foreign Affairs, [Obama's Libya Debacle](#), Alan J. Kuperman, March 2015

75 [Q1](#) [Professor Joffé]

76 Foreign Affairs, [Obama's Libya Debacle](#), Alan J. Kuperman, March 2015

77 [Q1](#) [Alison Pargeter]

78 [Q1](#) [Alison Pargeter]

79 [Q1](#) [Professor Joffé]

80 [Q1](#) [Alison Pargeter]

35. We were told that émigrés opposed to Muammar Gaddafi exploited unrest in Libya by overstating the threat to civilians and encouraging Western powers to intervene.⁸¹ In the course of his 40-year dictatorship Muammar Gaddafi had acquired many enemies in the Middle East and North Africa, who were similarly prepared to exaggerate the threat to civilians. Alison Pargeter told us that

the issue of mercenaries was amplified. I was told by Libyans here, “The Africans are coming. They’re going to massacre us. Gaddafi’s sending Africans into the streets. They’re killing our families.” I think that that was very much amplified. But I also think the Arab media played a very important role here. Al-Jazeera in particular, but also al-Arabiya, were reporting that Gaddafi was using air strikes against people in Benghazi and, I think, were really hamming everything up, and it turned out not to be true.⁸²

36. An Amnesty International investigation in June 2011 could not corroborate allegations of mass human rights violations by Gaddafi regime troops. However, it uncovered evidence that rebels in Benghazi made false claims and manufactured evidence. The investigation concluded that

much Western media coverage has from the outset presented a very one-sided view of the logic of events, portraying the protest movement as entirely peaceful and repeatedly suggesting that the regime’s security forces were unaccountably massacring unarmed demonstrators who presented no security challenge.⁸³

37. Many Western policymakers genuinely believed that Muammar Gaddafi would have ordered his troops to massacre civilians in Benghazi, if those forces had been able to enter the city. However, while Muammar Gaddafi certainly threatened violence against those who took up arms against his rule, this did not necessarily translate into a threat to everyone in Benghazi. In short, the scale of the threat to civilians was presented with unjustified certainty. US intelligence officials reportedly described the intervention as “an intelligence-light decision”.⁸⁴

38. We have seen no evidence that the UK Government carried out a proper analysis of the nature of the rebellion in Libya. It may be that the UK Government was unable to analyse the nature of the rebellion in Libya due to incomplete intelligence and insufficient institutional insight and that it was caught up in events as they developed. It could not verify the actual threat to civilians posed by the Gaddafi regime; it selectively took elements of Muammar Gaddafi’s rhetoric at face value; and it failed to identify the militant Islamist extremist element in the rebellion. UK strategy was founded on erroneous assumptions and an incomplete understanding of the evidence.

The shadow of Srebrenica

39. The Bosnian Serb Army killed more than 8,000 Muslims near the town of Srebrenica in July 1995. The international community’s inability to prevent that act of genocide influenced a generation of Western politicians and policymakers. Dr Fox told us that “a

81 [Q2](#) [Professor Joffé]

82 [Q2](#) [Alison Pargeter]

83 The Independent, [Amnesty questions claim that Gaddafi ordered rape as weapon of war](#), 23 June 2011

84 The Washington Times, [Hillary Clinton’s ‘WMD moment: US intelligence saw false narrative in Libya’](#), 29 January 2015

fear of...another Srebrenica on our hands...was very much a driving factor in the decision-making at the time.”⁸⁵ Lord Richards observed that “it would be a stain on our conscience for ever if we allowed another Srebrenica; I remember a lot of talk about Srebrenica”.⁸⁶ Lord Hague also cited the influence of Srebrenica on his thinking.⁸⁷ The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Tobias Ellwood MP, referred to “the horrific examples of Srebrenica, and Rwanda before, which we saw unfolding again before us in Libya in 2011.”⁸⁸

40. In his analysis of the operation of the National Security Council in February and March 2011, Sir Anthony Seldon reported a generational split between the 40-something politicians, including the then Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, for whom Srebrenica had been a formative experience, and older officials, who highlighted the need to strike a deal with Muammar Gaddafi.⁸⁹ Given the lack of reliable intelligence on which to build policy, British politicians and policymakers may have attached undue weight to their individual and collective memories of the appalling events at Srebrenica.

Supporting the rebels

41. The deployment of coalition air assets shifted the military balance in the Libyan civil war in favour of the rebels.⁹⁰ Lord Richards explained that

air power is a facilitator, not a guarantee of victory...the role of the ground forces is ultimately critical. Therefore, while air power was vital ... if the militias and our Arab allies had not been there playing a key role, I am not so certain that air power would have resulted in Gaddafi's downfall in the way it did.⁹¹

42. The combat performance of rebel ground forces was enhanced by personnel and intelligence provided by states such as the UK, France, Turkey, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.⁹² For example, Lord Richards told us that the UK “had a few people embedded” with the rebel forces.⁹³

43. Resolution 1973 called on United Nations member states to ensure the “strict implementation of the arms embargo”.⁹⁴ However, we were told that the international community turned a blind eye to the supply of weapons to the rebels.⁹⁵ Lord Richards highlighted “the degree to which the Emiratis and the Qataris...played a major role in the success of the ground operation.”⁹⁶ For example, Qatar supplied French Milan anti-tank missiles to certain rebel groups.⁹⁷ We were told that Qatar channelled its weapons to favoured militias rather than to the rebels as a whole.⁹⁸

85 [Q153](#)

86 [Q333](#)

87 [Q287](#)

88 [Q497](#)

89 Sir Anthony Seldon and Peter Snowden, *Cameron at 10*, p101

90 [Q16](#)

91 [Q318](#)

92 [Q19](#); [Q329](#)

93 [Q317](#)

94 United Nations, [Security Council Resolution 1973](#)

95 [Q20 \[Alison Pargeter\]](#)

96 [Q329](#)

97 The Guardian, [Libyan rebels receiving anti-tank weapons from Qatar](#), 14 April 2011

98 [Q29](#); Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn, *The Libyan Revolution and its Aftermath*, [p73](#)

44. The combination of coalition airpower with the supply of arms, intelligence and personnel to the rebels guaranteed the military defeat of the Gaddafi regime. On 20 March 2011, for example, Muammar Gaddafi's forces retreated some 40 miles from Benghazi following attacks by French aircraft.⁹⁹ If the primary object of the coalition intervention was the urgent need to protect civilians in Benghazi, then this objective was achieved in less than 24 hours.¹⁰⁰

The basis for intervention: did it change?

45. We questioned why NATO conducted air operations across Libya between April and October 2011 when it had secured the protection of civilians in Benghazi in March 2011. Lord Hague advanced the argument that "Gaddafi's forces remained a clear danger to civilians. Having been beaten back, they were not then going to sit quietly and accept the situation".¹⁰¹ Dr Fox stated that "the UN resolution said to take all possible measures to protect civilians, and that meant a constant degradation of command and control across the country. That meant not just in the east of the country, but in Tripoli."¹⁰² Throughout their evidence, Lord Hague and Dr Fox stuck to the line that the military intervention in Libya was intended to protect civilians and was not designed to deliver regime change.¹⁰³

46. We examined whether the UK and its coalition allies specifically targeted Muammar Gaddafi. Dr Fox was responsible for targeting in his role as Defence Secretary. He told us that

It was not within the UN resolution to specifically target individuals, but we did regard it as within our remit to target command and control centres. If some of the individuals whom we regarded as leaders of the regime happened to be there, that was their tough luck.¹⁰⁴

Dr Fox advanced the argument that Muammar Gaddafi's residence in Tripoli was also a "high-level command and control centre" and was therefore a legitimate target.¹⁰⁵

47. We asked Lord Richards whether the object of British policy in Libya was civilian protection or regime change. He told us that "one thing morphed almost ineluctably into the other" as the campaign developed its own momentum.¹⁰⁶ He expressed his concern about the strategic direction of the campaign in March 2011:

During Benghazi, an increasingly influential set of people started saying, "If we're really going to protect civilians, you've got to get rid of Gaddafi." That is when I said, "Well, is that really sensible? What are we going to do if he goes?" and all the things that I had learned through bitter experience. That was rather ignored in the majority view, which was, "We need to get rid of him, simply to make sure we meet the political aim of preventing large-scale civilian loss of life."¹⁰⁷

99 The Telegraph, *Libya: Benghazi about to fall...then came the planes*, 20 March 2011

100 CNN, *US official: Gaddafi's momentum stopped*, 21 March 2011

101 [Q154](#)

102 [Q156](#)

103 [Qq148-166](#)

104 [Q165](#)

105 [Q165](#)

106 [Q314](#)

107 [Q332](#)

48. When the then Prime Minister David Cameron sought and received parliamentary approval for military intervention in Libya on 21 March 2011, he assured the House of Commons that the object of the intervention was not regime change.¹⁰⁸ In April 2011, however, he signed a joint letter with United States President Barack Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy setting out their collective pursuit of “a future without Gaddafi”.¹⁰⁹

49. The UK's intervention in Libya was reactive and did not comprise action in pursuit of a strategic objective. This meant that a limited intervention to protect civilians drifted into a policy of regime change by military means.

The basis for intervention: were political alternatives explored?

50. Lord Richards told us that the British campaign plan included a pause after Benghazi had been secured to allow the international community to explore political options. However, the French military had not built such a pause into its strategy. The lack of international co-ordination to develop an agreed strategy meant that any potential pause for politics became unachievable.¹¹⁰

51. Lord Hague told us that the Government initially followed its Labour predecessor's policy of reconciliation with the Gaddafi regime when it assumed office in 2010.¹¹¹ The Government rapidly developed a new policy of intervention to protect civilians as Muammar Gaddafi's forces approached Benghazi in mid-February 2011.¹¹² It did not explore alternatives to military intervention such as sanctions, negotiations or the application of diplomatic pressure.¹¹³ In pursuing regime change, it abandoned a decade of foreign policy engagement, which had delivered some successes in relation to co-operation against Islamist extremism, improved British-Libyan relations, decommissioned weapons of mass destruction, collaboration on managing migration from North Africa and commercial opportunities for UK businesses. Bearing those points in mind, we examined whether it might have been possible to secure civilian protection and political reform through negotiation in early 2011.

Saif Gaddafi

52. Saif Gaddafi is the second son of Muammar Gaddafi.¹¹⁴ He was a member of his father's inner circle and exercised influence in Libya. In 2009, the then US Ambassador to Libya described Saif Gaddafi as the “heir apparent” in a report to the US State Department.¹¹⁵ Former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who knew the Gaddafi regime better than most Western politicians, confirmed that Saif Gaddafi was “the best, if not the only prospect” of effecting political change in Libya.¹¹⁶

53. We examined whether Saif Gaddafi might have been able to broker a settlement in Libya that included his father stepping down, the imposition of safeguards for civilians

108 HC Deb, 21 March 2011, [col. 703](#) [Commons Chamber]

109 BBC News, [Libya letter by Obama, Cameron and Sarkozy: Full text](#), 15 April 2011

110 [Qq319-322](#)

111 [Q148](#)

112 [Q148](#)

113 [Q14](#)

114 His full name is Saif al-Islam Gaddafi.

115 The New York Times, [A Selection From the Cache of Diplomatic Dispatches](#), 19 June 2011

116 [Q179](#)

and the introduction of political reforms to resolve the crisis.¹¹⁷ Lord Hague told us that Saif Gaddafi had called him “as the trouble began”.¹¹⁸ He rejected the proposition that Saif Gaddafi might have facilitated the abdication of Muammar Gaddafi and a negotiated solution to the crisis. He argued that “it would have been unwise for the British Foreign Secretary to suggest an internal coup within the Gaddafi Administration, particularly as the successor might have been no better than the predecessor.”¹¹⁹ After speaking to Lord Hague, Saif Gaddafi “did not call back again.”¹²⁰

54. It is ultimately unknowable whether Saif Gaddafi possessed the influence, character, judgment and experience to broker a ceasefire and to implement national political reform. He was, however, advised by and associated with reformists who subsequently delivered a democratic programme when they served in the NTC. For example, Mahmoud Jibril, who was NTC Prime Minister, had chaired Saif Gaddafi’s National Economic Development Board. And the NTC Chairman, Abdul Jalil, was selected by Saif Gaddafi to promote judicial reform as Libyan Justice Minister, a post he held before his defection to the rebels in 2011.¹²¹ Lord Hague told us that “the National Transitional Council was very experienced and respected—I certainly formed a very high opinion of them as I worked with them during the conflict—and included people such as Mahmoud Jibril and Abdul Jalil”.¹²² Whether engagement with Saif Gaddafi might have allowed Lord Hague to support Mahmoud Jibril and Abdul Jalil in implementing reform in Libya without incurring the political, military and human costs of intervention and regime change will never be known; such possibilities, however, should have been seriously considered at the time.

Muammar Gaddafi

55. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair provided a further example of contact with the Gaddafi regime. He told us that he spoke to Muammar Gaddafi on the telephone in February 2011.¹²³ Mr Blair subsequently provided us with the notes of those telephone calls, which we placed in the public domain for the first time.¹²⁴ The notes showed that Mr Blair attempted to convince Muammar Gaddafi to stop the violence and stand aside.¹²⁵

56. Muammar Gaddafi might have been seeking an exit from Libya in February and March 2011.¹²⁶ On 21 February 2011, for example, Lord Hague told reporters that he had seen credible information that Muammar Gaddafi was on his way to exile in Venezuela.¹²⁷ Concerted action after the telephone calls conducted by Mr Blair might have led to Muammar Gaddafi’s abdication and to a negotiated solution in Libya. It was therefore important to keep the lines of communication open. However, we saw no evidence that the then Prime Minister David Cameron attempted to exploit Mr Blair’s contacts. Mr Blair explained that both Mr Cameron and former United States Secretary of State Hillary

117 [Q14](#)

118 [Q159](#)

119 [Q160](#)

120 [Q159](#)

121 BBC News, [Key figures in Libya’s rebel council](#), 25 August 2011

122 [Q282](#)

123 [Q198](#)

124 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tony Blair and Gaddafi call, 25 February 2011, 1115-1145](#); Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tony Blair and Gaddafi call, 25 February 2011, 1535-1600](#)

125 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Tony Blair and Gaddafi call, 25 February 2011, 1535-1600](#)

126 [Q14](#)

127 The Telegraph, [Libya: Colonel Gaddafi ‘flees’ to Venezuela as cities fall to protesters](#), 21 February 2011

Clinton were aware that he was communicating with Muammar Gaddafi. We asked Mr Blair to describe Mr Cameron's reaction to his conversations with Muammar Gaddafi. He told us that Mr Cameron "was merely listening".¹²⁸

57. Political options were available if the UK Government had adhered to the spirit of Resolution 1973, implemented its original campaign plan and influenced its coalition allies to pause military action when Benghazi was secured in March 2011. Political engagement might have delivered civilian protection, regime change and reform at lesser cost to the UK and to Libya. If political engagement had been unsuccessful, the UK and its coalition allies would not have lost anything. Instead, the UK Government focused exclusively on military intervention. In particular, we saw no evidence that it tried to exploit former Prime Minister Tony Blair's contacts and influence with the Gaddafi regime.

Decision making

58. The National Security Council (NSC) is a Cabinet Committee that oversees national security, intelligence co-ordination and defence strategy.¹²⁹ It is chaired by the Prime Minister. The NSC was established by David Cameron in May 2010. It was intended to provide a formal mechanism to shape high-level decision-making.

59. Libya was the first test of the new NSC mechanism, which replaced the relatively informal process used during Tony Blair's premiership. The Iraq Inquiry examined in detail the decision-making in government that led to the UK's participation in the Iraq war in 2003.¹³⁰ The inquiry, which was chaired by Sir John Chilcot, criticised the informal approach adopted by former Prime Minister Tony Blair:

Most decisions on Iraq pre-conflict were taken either bilaterally between Mr Blair and the relevant Secretary of State or in meetings between Mr Blair, Mr Straw [Foreign Secretary] and Mr Hoon [Defence Secretary], with No.10 officials and, as appropriate, Mr John Scarlett (Chairman of the JIC), Sir Richard Dearlove and Admiral Boyce. Some of those meetings were minuted; some were not.¹³¹

The Iraq Inquiry pointed out that "the purpose of the minute of a meeting is to set out the conclusions reached so that those who have to take action know precisely what to do; the second purpose is to give the reasons why the conclusions were reached."¹³² In contrast with the informal process adopted by Mr Blair, every NSC meeting on Libya was minuted and the record circulated to Departments.¹³³

128 [Q212](#)

129 National Security Council, [Structure of the NSC](#)

130 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016

131 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 399

132 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 400

133 FCO ([LIB013](#)) Libya Crisis: National Security Adviser's review of central co-ordination and lessons learned, para 23

60. The Iraq Inquiry criticised the way in which legal advice in relation to UK participation in the Iraq war was delivered in 2003.¹³⁴ For example, it observed that the legal question whether Iraq was in breach of UN Resolution 1441 was resolved “in terms that can only be described as perfunctory” and that “no formal record was made of that decision and the precise grounds on which it was made remain unclear.”¹³⁵ In contrast, the Attorney-General or a representative was present at all NSC meetings, which were minuted, where a legal opinion was required in relation to Libya.¹³⁶

61. The Iraq Inquiry concluded that

where policy options include significant military deployments, particularly where they will have implications for the responsibilities of more than one Cabinet Minister, are likely to be controversial, and/or are likely to give rise to significant risks, the options should be considered by a group of Ministers meeting regularly, whether or not they are formally designated as a Cabinet Committee, so that Cabinet as a whole can be enabled to take informed collective decisions.¹³⁷

On paper, the Iraq Inquiry's recommendation described a committee with a function similar to that of the NSC.

62. The formal NSC mechanism is a clear improvement on the informal decision-making process utilised by Tony Blair's Government. However, it is not perfect. For example, the operation of the NSC ensured that all the key political and military decision makers participated in a minuted discussion on the question whether to intervene in Libya, which was chaired by the then Prime Minister. Lord Hague recalled

the Prime Minister [David Cameron] summing up the meeting and saying, “The key question is this: is it in the British national interest, if this is about to happen in Benghazi and this conflict is happening in this way, for us to intervene? That is the question we have to decide.” And having taken opinions from all around the room, he concluded that it was.¹³⁸

63. We asked Lord Richards whether he was convinced that military intervention in Libya was in the national interest in March 2011. He replied that “the Prime Minister felt it was in our national interest.”¹³⁹ Former Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, Sir John Sawers, reportedly also doubted whether the intervention in Libya was in the British national interest.¹⁴⁰ Lord Richards told us that he was unconvinced by the development of UK strategy in spring and summer 2011. With the benefit of hindsight, his concerns were well founded, but the NSC mechanism failed to capture them and bring them to the attention of the Cabinet when it ratified the NSC's decisions.

134 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 432

135 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 436

136 FCO (LIB013) Libya Crisis: National Security Adviser's Review of Central Co-ordination and lessons learned, Summary

137 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 405

138 [Q171](#)

139 [Q328](#)

140 Sir Anthony Seldon and Peter Snowden, *Cameron at 10*, p101

64. The Iraq Inquiry highlighted “the important function which a Minister without departmental responsibilities for the issues under consideration can play. This can provide some external challenge from experienced members of the government and mitigate any tendency towards group-think.”¹⁴¹ The exclusive nature of the NSC membership limited the possibility of such constructive outside challenge in the development of policy.¹⁴²

65. David Cameron commissioned the then National Security Adviser (NSA), Sir Peter Ricketts, to examine how the NSC functioned in relation to the Libyan intervention. The NSA’s review was published in December 2011, two months after the end of the Libyan civil war, which may have been too soon to assimilate lessons learned.¹⁴³ In addition, the NSA serves as secretary to the NSC, so this review was not independent. Having rapidly marked his own homework, the NSA concluded that “the NSC sub-committee on Libya... successfully brought together key Ministers and officials and was an effective vehicle for driving the campaign.”¹⁴⁴ Bearing in mind the political, economic and human state of Libya today, this judgment appears questionable.

66. We note former Prime Minister David Cameron’s decisive role when the National Security Council discussed intervention in Libya. We also note that Lord Richards implicitly dissociated himself from that decision in his oral evidence to this inquiry. *The Government must commission an independent review of the operation of the NSC. This review should consider the merits of introducing a formal mechanism to allow non-ministerial NSC members to request prime ministerial direction to undertake actions agreed in the NSC. It should be informed by the conclusions of the Iraq Inquiry and examine whether the weaknesses in governmental decision-making in relation to the Iraq intervention in 2003 have been addressed by the introduction of the NSC.*

141 Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors, [The Report of the Iraq Inquiry](#), HC264, 6 July 2016, Executive Summary, para 407

142 The membership of the NSC and NSC sub-committee that took decisions in relation to Libya is set out in FCO [\(LIB013\)](#) Libya Crisis: National Security Adviser’s Review of Central Co-ordination and lessons learned, Annex C, paras 6 and 7

143 FCO [\(LIB013\)](#) Libya Crisis: National Security Adviser’s Review of Central Co-ordination and lessons learned

144 FCO [\(LIB013\)](#) Libya Crisis: National Security Adviser’s Review of Central Co-ordination and lessons learned, Summary

2 Collapse

67. Muammar Gaddafi spent 40 years building an authoritarian regime in Libya. When his Administration collapsed in October 2011, security, basic governmental services and the rule of law collapsed with it.¹⁴⁵ Alison Pargeter told us that “Libya was a country with no institutions to speak of. When you took Gaddafi away, you took everything away.”¹⁴⁶

68. The lack of effective government and internal security resulted in fragmentation, lawlessness and violence.¹⁴⁷ For example, Islamist militants attacked the United States diplomatic compound in Benghazi in September 2012, killing the United States Ambassador Chris Stevens. And the then UK Ambassador Sir Dominic Asquith survived an assassination attempt in Benghazi in June 2012. The collapsing security situation made it increasingly difficult for United Nations officials and non-governmental organisations to work in Libya.

Stabilisation

69. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) told us that “The guiding principles of the UK’s response planning on stabilisation were that it should be Libyan-owned and co-ordinated by the UN.”¹⁴⁸ Stabilisation was the key requirement in the aftermath of the Libyan civil war. If internal security had been consolidated in late 2011 and early 2012, it might have been possible to fill the administrative vacuum left by the collapsed Gaddafi regime.¹⁴⁹ The RAND Corporation estimated that the deployment of a stabilisation force of some 13,000 troops might have provided sufficient security to allow the reconstruction of the Libyan state in late 2011.¹⁵⁰

Libyan ownership

70. Sir Dominic Asquith told us that “given the state of the Libyan capacity to administer after Gaddafi...Libyan-led did not necessarily mean well-led.”¹⁵¹ Alison Pargeter provided an example of how Libyan ownership worked in practice:

The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence were largely in the hands of militias. The head of the armed forces, Youssef al-Mangoush, did not want to create armed forces; he favoured channelling money to the Libya Shield, to some of the brigades, and so did his successor Al-Abedi.¹⁵²

Libya Shield is a militant Islamist militia. It was reportedly responsible for killing anti-militia protestors in Tripoli and Benghazi in 2013.¹⁵³ Sir Dominic Asquith told us that he warned Libyan leaders

145 [Q45](#)

146 [Q27](#)

147 [Q27](#); [Q42](#)

148 FCO ([LIB0012](#)) para 10

149 [Q53](#)

150 [Q27](#)

151 [Q100](#)

152 [Q45](#)

153 Joseph Walker-Cousins ([LIB008](#)) para 14; Human Rights Watch, [Libya: 6 Months On, Scant Action on Protester Killings](#), December 2013

time and again about the dangers of relying on militias to provide security, effectively giving them permission to operate. That was why the number of revolutionaries mushroomed in the next year from the 20,000 to 25,000 who fought in the revolution to 140,000...as groups who did not take part in the fighting were effectively established to keep order around the country.¹⁵⁴

71. Lord Hague explained how the use of militias to provide security weakened Libya's institutional capacity:

The decision by Libyan leaders...to involve militias in trying to stabilise the security of the state, rather than progressively exclude militias from one city and then another city, which would have been an alternative model, meant that the state's security in order to mobilise its resources was never there.¹⁵⁵

72. The Libyan state weakened its own limited institutional capacity by paying militias to provide security. The growth of state-funded militias with local rather than national loyalties was a key destabilising factor after 2011.

United Nations leadership

73. Libyan institutional incapacity meant that the United Nations was left to lead on stabilisation. Lord Hague told us that "the UN programme was not prescriptive enough."¹⁵⁶ Sir Dominic Asquith concurred with Lord Hague:

it would have been more helpful if the UN had been more prescriptive in identifying the priorities for a Libyan Government or helping that Government to identify those priorities, and then accessing and leveraging out of the international community the sort of assistance that would have helped a Libyan Government to do the things it needed to do, rather than the posture that I think UNSMIL (United Nations Support Mission in Libya) were happier with, which was, "We will absorb, wait and listen to what the Libyan Government says it needs and then react."¹⁵⁷

74. The Libyan people's desire to own their own future after 40 years of rule by Muammar Gaddafi was understandable. However, the lack of institutional capacity and political experience in post-Gaddafi Libya meant that the international community needed to exercise leadership rather than reacting to events. We were told that the United Nations was especially ineffective in leading and supporting the provision of policing and internal security.¹⁵⁸ Ian Martin, United Nations Special Representative to Libya from September 2011 to October 2012, acknowledged that the international community's "greatest failure was the lack of progress in the security sector".¹⁵⁹ The lack of internal security undermined other economic and political reconstruction initiatives implemented by the United Nations and its partner organisations.¹⁶⁰

154 [Q104](#)

155 [Q293](#)

156 [Q282](#)

157 [Q100](#)

158 [Q282](#); [Q101](#)

159 [Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn, *The Libyan Revolution and its Aftermath*, p150](#)

160 [Qq45-47](#)

75. With the benefit of hindsight, Lord Hague concluded that “a coalition of the willing working on Libyan stabilisation and reconstruction might have been more effective than a UN-led process.”¹⁶¹ *The FCO should lead the international community to review whether the United Nations is the appropriate body to co-ordinate stabilisation and reconstruction in a post-conflict environment and whether it has the appropriate resources, and if not to identify alternatives that could be more effective. Such a review is a practical and urgent requirement, because the United Nations might be asked to co-ordinate a similar mission in Syria, Yemen or Iraq in the near future.*

Supporting democracy

76. The United Nations performed most effectively in its role co-ordinating and overseeing elections to the new democratic assembly, the General National Congress.¹⁶² A government with a democratic mandate was needed to build legitimacy, but we were told by Alison Pargeter that the elections may not have been well timed:

The Libyans themselves were complaining, “Why have elections been foisted on us?” This is a country with no political culture, no experience of politics, not even any experience of civil society or any kind of political activism. Elections happened very quickly. I think that political parties had about 18 days to campaign, in a society totally unfamiliar with that political system.¹⁶³

77. The limited stock of effective Libyan politicians was further reduced by the elections. For example, Lord Hague expressed his admiration for the work done by Mahmoud Jibril and Abdul Jalil on the appointed National Transitional Council. Unfortunately, those experienced figures “disappeared from the scene very quickly” after the elections.¹⁶⁴ Lord Hague concluded that “There is a major issue, for interventions in the future where there has been a fall of a regime, as to how quickly elections are held.”¹⁶⁵

Reconstruction: planning

78. The FCO told us that the UK worked closely with the United Nations on post-conflict planning.¹⁶⁶ Sir Dominic Asquith highlighted the “extensive planning by the stabilisation unit here in Whitehall”.¹⁶⁷ However, those plans were founded on the same incomplete and inaccurate intelligence that informed the initial military intervention [see paragraphs 25 to 30]. Sir Alan Duncan MP was a Minister in the Department for International Development in the immediate post-conflict period. He stated that the Whitehall planners “did not know what was happening on the ground.”¹⁶⁸ He added that the plans were undermined by the recurring failure to understand and take account of the tribal nature of Libya.¹⁶⁹

161 [Q290](#)

162 [Q35](#); [Q282](#)

163 [Q44](#) [Alison Pargeter]

164 [Q282](#)

165 [Q284](#)

166 FCO ([LIB0012](#)) para 10

167 [Q88](#)

168 [Q381](#)

169 [Q379](#); [Q381](#) [Sir Alan Duncan]

79. Sir Alan Duncan also pointed out that the planners failed to appreciate that stabilisation and political reconstruction were preconditions for the successful implementation of 'normalisation' plans:

the stabilisation plans were unrealistic...I recall writing on the "Advice to Ministers", "fanciful rot"...it was an unrealistic desktop exercise. It was very theoretical. In a perfect world, yes, let's have water, sanitation, schools, political dialogue and so on, but in the absence of a proper political settlement and indeed a settled state, there was no forum in which stabilisation could take place.¹⁷⁰

Lord Hague stated that

there was a lot of planning, but lack of ability to implement it because of the condition of Libya and the lack of stable institutions and capabilities there afterwards. I don't think in this case it would be fair to say that there was a lack of planning.¹⁷¹

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Tobias Ellwood observed that

In 2011 and 2012 new Libyan Ministers were overwhelmed with plans and project proposals from different countries and organisations from across the globe. It is clear now that there was a lack of institutional capacity to manage the flow of ideas and advisors and to translate advice into policy implementation.¹⁷²

While the UK Government was not guilty of failing to plan for the post-conflict period, it did not plan effectively in that it relied on plans that were incapable of implementation.

Reconstruction: resources

80. Sir Dominic Asquith told us that "Libya, with a small population of roughly 6 million, would have considerable assets at its disposal and the provision of money or funding was not the highest priority."¹⁷³ However, Libyan resources to fund reconstruction were constrained by the international freeze on financial assets and by reduced oil production and exports due to the volatile internal security situation. Bearing those points in mind, we examined the UK contribution to supporting Libyan reconstruction.

81. Unpublished House of Commons Library research found that the UK spent some £320 million on bombing Libya and approximately £25 million on reconstruction programmes.¹⁷⁴ However, those figures do not include the UK's contribution to multilateral reconstruction projects, such as those run by the United Nations. In addition, Dr Adrian Gallagher, University of Leeds, pointed out that the Government reduced its estimate of the cost of the military intervention from £320 million to £234 million.¹⁷⁵ Taking into account UK

170 [Q377](#)

171 [Q280](#)

172 [Q497](#)

173 [Q102](#)

174 House of Commons Library, Unpublished research

175 Dr Adrian Gallagher ([LIB003](#)) para 14

contributions to programmes run by the United Nations, which had overall responsibility for co-ordinating reconstruction, and the European Union, Dr Gallagher concluded that the UK “spent just under half as much (48.72%) on rebuild than on intervention.”¹⁷⁶

82. Lord Hague commented that Libya “is a naturally rich country, particularly given its small population, but you can only utilise those resources if you have a functioning state.”¹⁷⁷ President Barack Obama highlighted the lack of “any kind of structure there that we could interact with and start training and start providing resources.”¹⁷⁸

83. The level of funding provided by the international community and the UK was not the decisive factor in the collapse of the Libyan state. Nevertheless a key problem was institutional incapacity to absorb financial and other resources provided by the international community, and this is something that should have been foreseen and planned for.

Securing weapons

84. Libya purchased some £30 billion of weapons and ammunition between 1969 and 2010.¹⁷⁹ Many of those munitions were not issued to the Libyan Army and were instead stored in warehouses. After the collapse of the Gaddafi regime, some weapons and ammunition remained in Libya, where they fell into the hands of the militias.¹⁸⁰ Other Libyan weapons and ammunition were trafficked across North and West Africa and the Middle East.

85. The United Nations Panel of Experts appointed to examine the impact of Resolution 1973 identified the presence of ex-Libyan weapons in Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Gaza, Mali, Niger, Tunisia and Syria.¹⁸¹ The panel concluded that “arms originating from Libya have significantly reinforced the military capacity of terrorist groups operating in Algeria, Egypt, Mali and Tunisia.”¹⁸² In the 2010-15 Parliament, our predecessor Committee noted that the failure to secure the Gaddafi regime’s arms caches had led to “a proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and some heavier artillery, across North and West Africa”. It identified that Libyan small arms had apparently ended up in the hands of Boko Haram militants.¹⁸³

86. Dr Fox told us that securing anti-aircraft weaponry was a key objective in 2011.¹⁸⁴ Muammar Gaddafi had acquired some 20,000 man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) in the course of his 40-year rule.¹⁸⁵ MANPADS are heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles that can be fired at aircraft by a single individual or small team. They pose

176 Dr Adrian Gallagher ([LIB003](#)) para 14

177 [Q293](#)

178 The Atlantic, [The Obama Doctrine](#), April 2016

179 The Guardian, [Where is Gaddafi's vast arms stockpile?](#), 26 October 2011

180 [Q77](#)

181 United Nations, [Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 \(2011\)](#), paras 200–201

182 United Nations, [Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 \(2011\)](#), para 201

183 Foreign Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2013-14, [The UK's response to extremism and instability in North and West Africa](#), HC86-1, para 70

184 [Q257](#)

185 The Independent, [Isis in Libya: How Muammar Gaddafi's anti-aircraft missiles are falling into the jihadists' hands](#), 11 March 2016

an especial threat to civilian airliners, which are not designed to evade surface-to-air missiles. In January 2014, Egyptian Islamist insurgents used an ex-Libyan MANPAD to shoot down an Egyptian Army helicopter in the Sinai.¹⁸⁶

87. We asked Dr Fox what steps he had taken as Defence Secretary to secure MANPADS in Libya. He explained that

It was and is always an unavoidable consequence of not having ground forces that you can have leakage of weapons of that nature. We were aware of convoys leaving Libya and heading south, and yet because of the possibility that there could be trucks with civilians in them, they were not assessed as legitimate targets. If you limit your involvement purely to air power, in any conflict there will be a limit to what you can do in terms of interdiction of weaponry in that way.¹⁸⁷

Lord Richards told us that it was a policy objective to secure ex-Gaddafi regime weapons and ammunition in the aftermath of the civil war. However, he could not remember the UK “doing anything to achieve it”.¹⁸⁸

88. The international community's inability to secure weapons abandoned by the Gaddafi regime fuelled instability in Libya and enabled and increased terrorism across North and West Africa and the Middle East. The UK Government correctly identified the need to secure weapons immediately after the 2011 Libyan civil war, but it and its international partners took insufficient action to achieve that objective. However, it is probable that none of the states that intervened in Libya would have been prepared to commit the necessary military and political resources to secure stocks of weapons and ammunition. That consideration should have informed their calculation to intervene.

A failure of strategy

89. Dr Fox helpfully explained his strategic criteria for UK participation in a military intervention:

No. 1: what does a good outcome look like? No. 2: is such an outcome engineerable? No. 3: do we have to be part of the engineering? No. 4: how much of the aftermath would you like to own? I think that there is, and has been in our history, a tendency to answer No. 1 without answering the rest of the questions. It is not responsible for any Government at any time to go into any conflict and to deploy our armed forces without answering all four questions.¹⁸⁹

The answer to question No. 1 was “civilian protection” in February 2011. In that case, the UK Government had plausible answers to questions Nos. 2 to 4. As Lord Richards explained, it had a coherent strategy based on protecting civilians and pausing to explore political options [see paragraph 50]. However, it could not influence its coalition partners to

¹⁸⁶ The Independent, [Isis in Libya: How Muammar Gaddafi's anti-aircraft missiles are falling into the jihadists' hands](#), 11 March 2016

¹⁸⁷ [Q257](#)

¹⁸⁸ [Q354](#)

¹⁸⁹ [Q267](#)

agree and implement that strategy. Instead, it suddenly changed its answer to question No. 1 to “regime change” without addressing questions Nos. 2 to 4. This strategic incoherence formed the root of the international community’s failure to stabilise Libya.

90. In September 2011, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2009, which set out the mandate for the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).¹⁹⁰ UNSMIL was empowered to “support” and “assist” Libyan national efforts to restore security and state authority. Resolution 2009 did not empower UNSMIL to exercise leadership, which was a fatal omission bearing in mind the limited capacity of the Libyan state and politicians.

91. President Barack Obama expressed his disappointment in the UK and France for not exercising leadership on stabilisation and reconstruction, stating that “I had more faith in the Europeans, given Libya’s proximity, being invested in the follow-up.”¹⁹¹ He added that the then Prime Minister David Cameron stopped paying attention and became “distracted by a range of other things.”¹⁹²

92. We recognise that the damaging experience of post-war intervention in Iraq engendered an understandable reluctance to impose solutions in Libya. However, because the UK along with France led the military intervention, it had a particular responsibility to support Libyan economic and political reconstruction, which became an impossible task because of the failure to establish security on the ground.

190 United Nations, [Security Council Resolution 2009](#), 16 September 2011

191 The Atlantic, [The Obama Doctrine](#), April 2016

192 The Atlantic, [The Obama Doctrine](#), April 2016

3 Future policy

93. Following the general election in 2014, Libya was governed by two competing administrations, one of which, the General National Congress (GNC), was based in Tripoli in the west and the other one of which, the House of Representatives (HOR), was based in Tobruk in the east. When the HOR was ejected from Tripoli in 2014, it lost control of key state institutions such as the National Oil Corporation. In response, the HOR created parallel institutions in the east. This left Libya with two competing national oil companies, which has restricted oil exports, economic growth and tax revenues.¹⁹³

94. Militias associated with the two administrations have fought an intermittent civil war across Libya since summer 2014. The consequent collapse of internal security and the rule of law engendered ongoing humanitarian, economic and migration crises.¹⁹⁴ In addition, various tribes, independent militias and ISIL took advantage of the absence of central government to seize control of portions of Libyan territory.

Government of National Accord

95. The United Nations attempted to address the fragmentation of authority in Libya by brokering the formation of a single Government of National Accord (GNA). The FCO submitted written evidence to our inquiry in September 2015. It stated that the then United Nations Special Representative, Bernardino León, was hoping to “reach agreement between the participants of the political dialogue in time to allow a new Government of National Accord (GNA) to be formed by 20 October 2015.”¹⁹⁵

96. The FCO was overly optimistic in its assessment that the GNA would be appointed by October 2015. The Libyan Political Agreement, which detailed the settlement establishing the GNA, was signed in December 2015 following extensive negotiations.¹⁹⁶ However, the formation of the GNA was contingent on ratification by the HOR, which retained legislative, appointment and scrutiny functions under the Libyan Political Agreement.¹⁹⁷ At the time of writing (September 2016), however, the HOR has not held a vote to ratify the GNA, despite having made several promises to do so.¹⁹⁸ When we visited North Africa in March 2016, we heard that some HOR Deputies were boycotting proceedings, that others were unwilling to attend due to the personal danger and that at least one Deputy had been kidnapped. Those barriers to the ratification of the GNA are indicative of the deep political, tribal and religious divisions in Libya.

97. Despite the HOR's failure to hold a vote on ratification, the United Nations recognised the GNA as the sole legitimate government of Libya in December 2015.¹⁹⁹ The GNA conducted its initial meetings in Tunisia, because it was too dangerous for it to meet in

193 The Libya Observer, [Tobruk Parliament's government sells oil illegally](#), 25 April 2016

194 FCO (LIB0012) paras 33 to 38

195 FCO (LIB0012) para 22

196 UNSMIL, [Libyan Political Agreement](#), 17 December 2015

197 UNSMIL, [Libyan Political Agreement](#), 17 December 2015, Articles 12 and 13

198 The Economist, [Fighting Islamic State in Libya](#), 17 June 2016

199 United Nations, [Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2259 \(2015\) Security Council Welcomes Signing of Libyan Political Agreement on New Government for Strife-Torn Country](#), 23 December 2015

Tripoli due to the threat from local militias. In March 2016—six months after the deadline highlighted by the FCO—GNA Prime Minister Fayeze al-Serraj and some of his Ministers relocated to Tripoli, where they assumed control of some Government Ministries.²⁰⁰

Migration: Economic migrants and refugees

98. The lack of effective government in Libya after 2011 weakened border controls and undermined the rule of law. People traffickers exploited this failure of government by smuggling migrants through Libya and across the Mediterranean. The FCO told us that

trafficking networks operating across Libyan territory are mostly criminally controlled and have thrived in the absence of strong central authority. People smuggling is currently perceived within Libyan political circles as a low priority, and is seen by many Libyans as a “Western” problem. The migrants themselves are often subject to violence and abuse, and arbitrarily held in detention centres.²⁰¹

99. Most migrants who cross the Mediterranean from Libya intend to travel to Italian territory. When it became apparent in 2013 that a migrant crisis had developed in Libya, Italy implemented border patrols and a search and rescue service under a national programme called Operation Mare Nostrum. This scheme was withdrawn in 2014.²⁰² The European Union border control agency FRONTEX assumed responsibility for border patrol functions in November 2014 under Operation Triton.

100. Operation Triton was initially less well resourced than Operation Mare Nostrum. Between October 2014 and April 2015, Operation Triton involved the expenditure of 3 million euros a month on an operation which extended 30 miles from the Italian coastline; Operation Mare Nostrum involved the expenditure of 9 million euros a month on an operation that covered 27,000 square miles of the Mediterranean.²⁰³ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) calculated that 30 times as many migrant deaths occurred between January and April 2015 under Operation Triton compared with the same period in 2014 under Operation Mare Nostrum.²⁰⁴

101. The then Minister of State, FCO, Baroness Anelay of St Johns set out the UK Government's position on Operation Triton in October 2014:

We do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. We believe that they create an unintended “pull factor”, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths.²⁰⁵

In line with Baroness Anelay's statement, the UK contribution to Operation Triton entailed the deployment of a single debriefing officer to Italy in November 2014.²⁰⁶

200 For example, the GNA did not take control of the Transport Ministry until late April 2016.

201 FCO (LIB012) para 35

202 Reuters, [Italy in talks with EU to share responsibility for boat migrants](#), 8 July 2014

203 The Guardian, [UK axes support for Mediterranean migrant rescue operation](#), 27 October 2014

204 FCO (LIB012) para 34

205 HL Deb, 15 October 2014, [col. WA41](#) [Lords Written Answer]

206 HL Deb, 30 October 2014, [col. 1310](#) [Lords Chamber]

102. Hundreds of migrants transiting from Libya to Italy drowned in shipwrecks in April 2015.²⁰⁷ In response, the Government abruptly reversed its position on Operation Triton and deployed HMS Bulwark and three helicopters to the Mediterranean. The UK currently deploys “two Border Force patrol vessels” to support Operation Triton.²⁰⁸ In addition, the UK contributed Royal Navy frigates to Operation Sophia, an ongoing EU mission “which focuses on understanding the criminal networks behind the boats.”²⁰⁹

103. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimated that some 1 million migrants were present in Libya in June 2016. This estimate comprised 425,000 internally displaced Libyans, 250,000 non-Libyan migrants and 250,000 returnees.²¹⁰ Most non-Libyan migrants travelled from West Africa, the Horn of Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. The most common countries of origin for non-Libyan migrants were Niger, Egypt, Chad, Ghana and Sudan.²¹¹ Between 1 January and 31 May 2016, 47,851 migrants arrived in Italy after crossing the Mediterranean from Libya. A similar number of migrants attempted the crossing over the same period in 2015. Despite the increased resources committed to Operation Triton, however, crossing the Mediterranean is becoming increasingly hazardous for migrants transiting through Libya. The IOM recorded 2,061 migrants as dead or missing between 1 January and 31 May 2016, which showed a 15% increase in fatalities compared with the same period in 2015.²¹²

104. People smugglers have reportedly used search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean to facilitate people trafficking.²¹³ The international community has a duty to rescue migrants in international waters. That means that if people smugglers can ship migrants into international waters, they can contact search and rescue services, which will rescue the migrants and transport them to Europe. Addressing irregular migration across the Mediterranean will require long-term solutions that include the disruption of the business model of people traffickers who seek to profit by exploiting migrants. The establishment of a national authority that can effectively police Libyan territorial waters and turn boats back to Libyan ports is a critical objective. However, it would be unrealistic to hope for the success of such efforts in the short term, because control of the Libyan coastline is contingent on effective nationwide government by the GNA.

105. The FCO must set out and re-examine the evidence base underpinning its assertion in October 2014 that “planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean ... create an unintended ‘pull factor’, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing”. It must also assess whether planned search and rescue operations encouraged migrants to cross the Mediterranean in the first half of 2016 in the light of people smugglers’ current methods of operation in relation to international search and rescue. It should support Italian and wider European efforts to secure the agreement of countries of origin to accept, where possible, the repatriation of irregular migrants who have arrived in Europe but do not meet asylum criteria, as well as the need to tackle the main factors fuelling the desire to migrate. Given its role in the conflict and subsequent destabilisation in Libya, the UK has a particular responsibility in relation to migrants and refugees, an issue which has been exacerbated by the collapse of the Libyan state.

207 The Telegraph, [UN confirms 800 dead in shipwreck disaster](#), 20 April 2015

208 FCO (LIB012) para 37

209 FCO (LIB012) para 37

210 International Organization for Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix Libya](#), May-June 2016, p1

211 International Organization for Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix Libya](#), May-June 2016, p19

212 International Organization for Migration, [Displacement Tracking Matrix Libya](#), May-June 2016, p20

213 Patrick Kingsley, *The New Odyssey: The Story of Europe’s Refugee Crisis*, p99

Internal security

106. The maintenance of internal security is both a precondition of and obstacle to effective national government in Libya. Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy Director-General, Royal United Services Institute, pointed out that despite the formation of the GNA

there will not be a single Libyan security force for some time to come. It will be a decentralised state in terms of security provision; a number of different militias in different places...you would still find a large part of the energy of the various different militias and official army focused on defending against each other.²¹⁴

Professor Joffé commented that

you may well be able to constitute a new institution, and you may even be able to populate it, but until it controls security, it is an irrelevance. How it is going to control security, I really cannot see, partly because of the resistance of General Khalifa Haftar, and also simply because of the existing militias...They are still extremely resistant to any question of external control.²¹⁵

107. Khalifa Haftar is the commander of the Libyan National Army, which is a relatively well trained and equipped Libyan militia. Despite its name, the Libyan National Army is associated with the HOR in Tobruk. The GNA apparently exerts no control over Khalifa Haftar, who has fought Islamist groups and other militias in Libya since 2014. Khalifa Haftar reportedly encouraged his supporters in the HOR to boycott proceedings to ratify the GNA.²¹⁶

108. In August 2016, the Libyan National Army clashed with another militia, the Petroleum Facilities Guard, around the Zueitina oil terminal.²¹⁷ The Petroleum Facilities Guard is associated with the National Oil Corporation based in Tripoli. The oil infrastructure at Zueitina is key to Libya's oil economy. The Governments of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK and the United States issued a joint statement of concern on 10 August 2016.²¹⁸ The statement emphasised that

control of all facilities should be transferred unconditionally and without preconditions or delay back to the legitimate national authorities recognised as such by UN Security Council Resolution 2259. All parties [should] refrain from hostilities and avoid any action that could damage or disrupt Libya's energy infrastructure...Restoring oil exports is vital to generating revenues that can provide for the essential needs of the Libyan people, including electricity, healthcare, and infrastructure. It is in the interests of all Libyans that they fully support the efforts led by the GNA to provide these key services to the Libyan people.²¹⁹

109. The GNA can only govern effectively if it controls the militias, but the militias can only be controlled by an effective government. Jonathan Powell told us that that Catch

214 [Q410](#)

215 [Q83](#)

216 BBC News, [Profile: Libya's military strongman Khalifa Haftar](#), 22 April 2016

217 Libya Observer, [NOC says fight between Haftar and Jodran will destroy oil facilities](#), 8 August 2016

218 FCO, [Joint statement on Libya](#), 10 August 2016

219 FCO, [Joint statement on Libya](#), 10 August 2016

22 situation is a function of progress on the security track falling behind progress on the political track.²²⁰ The challenge for the international community is to identify and promote policies that simultaneously facilitate internal security and political reconciliation.

110. During our inquiry we explored other constitutional options including a return to the monarchy. This idea received occasional but far from universal support from Libyan interlocutors. This proposition has also been floated by Libyans such as the former Foreign Minister Abdel Aziz.²²¹ However, this concept faces profound challenges. The fragility of the carefully crafted process towards a unified government does not need distractions. The immediate crisis means that the international community must focus on establishing the authority of the GNA.

111. The United Nations has brokered the formation of an inclusive Government of National Accord (GNA). Stable government is the *sine qua non* for the resolution of Libya's ongoing humanitarian, migrant, economic and security crises. However, regional actors are currently undermining the GNA by flouting the United Nations arms embargo and using Libyan militias as proxies. The GNA is the only game in town. If it fails, the danger is that Libya will descend into a full-scale civil war to control territory and oil resources. The international community must support the United Nations and the people of Libya by uniting behind the GNA; the alternative is political fragmentation, internecine violence, economic collapse and even more human suffering.

ISIL in Libya

112. The FCO told us that "Political instability in Libya has led to a permissive environment for terrorist groups in which to operate, including ISIL affiliated groups".²²² Professor Patrick Porter, Professor of Strategic Studies at the University of Exeter, agreed with the FCO analysis, stating that "a lack of effective government is creating opportunities for the Islamic State."²²³

113. Beginning in late 2014, ISIL took advantage of governmental weakness to seize territory and bases in Sabratha, Derna and Sirte. Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy Director-General, Royal United Services Institute, estimated ISIL manpower at between 3,000 and 6,000 fighters, many of whom are not Libyan. However, he added that

Islamic State seems to be encouraging its supporters in North Africa to go to Libya now, rather than to Syria and Iraq, so the trajectory is probably upwards, but it is still relatively small and weak in strength compared with the accumulation of all the other Libyan armed forces.²²⁴

114. Libyan militias initially appeared relatively unconcerned by ISIL's presence on the ground. The Guardian's Libya Correspondent, Chris Stephen, told us that ISIL has

220 [Q450](#)

221 Al Monitor, [Libya Foreign Minister calls for return of monarchy](#), 7 April 2014

222 FCO ([LIB0012](#)) para 28

223 [Q410](#) [Professor Patrick Porter]

224 [Q410](#) [Malcolm Chalmers]

inserted themselves, particularly in Sirte, between the two factions...where there is a sort of no man's land...it is not an existential threat for those two sides. They are more worried about each other. For them, ISIS is a nuisance, but it is not a threat to their future.²²⁵

115. In that context, Khalifa Haftar is keen to establish his credentials as a friend of the West and an enemy of ISIL, which he might hope would grant him a similar status with the West to that of the Kurdish Peshmerga. He has commented that "If the international community supports us, and I ask it to do so by lifting the embargo on weapons, then we could eliminate Daesh in Libya definitively and quickly."²²⁶ Khalifa Haftar's rhetoric in relation to ISIL has not been matched by his actions. In August 2016, for example, he reportedly moved his forces towards an oil refinery which is key to controlling Libya's oil wealth but which is unrelated to ISIL's current operations.²²⁷

116. ISIL has used its presence in Libya to train terrorists. For example, Sefeddine Rezgui, the gunman who killed Western holidaymakers in Tunisia in June 2015, was trained by ISIL at its base in Sabratha along with the two gunmen who killed 22 tourists at the Bardo museum in Tunis.²²⁸ ISIL's plans may extend beyond terrorism. Vice-Admiral Clive Johnstone, a Royal Navy officer and NATO commander, commented that

We know they [ISIL] have ambitions to go offshore ... There is a horrible opportunity in the future that a misdirected, untargeted round of a very high quality weapons system will just happen to target a cruise liner, or an oil platform, or a container ship.²²⁹

117. While defeating all manifestations of violent extremism should remain a UK Government priority, the primary objective in Libya should be to support a central authority that can deliver greater stability, address the root causes of extremism and act as an effective partner in the common struggle against militant groups.

Arms embargo

118. The United Nations imposed an embargo on exporting arms to Libya in 2011. That embargo still applies, but it has not been universally observed.²³⁰ For example, the United Arab Emirates reportedly supplied Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army with trucks, armoured vehicles and ammunition in April 2016.²³¹ Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy Director-General at the Royal United Services Institute, highlighted

the division between those who are more aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood and those who are not. That brought in external actors from both sides in the Arab world, from Turkey and Qatar on the one hand and Egypt and the UAE on the other. That struggle has gone through periods when it has been relatively quiescent in security terms, and then since 2014 it has become more open.²³²

225 [Q410](#) [Chris Stephen]

226 Reuters, [Libya's Haftar says won't work with unity government until militias disbanded](#), 20 May 2016

227 FCO, [Joint statement on Libya](#), 10 August 2016

228 The Guardian, [Tunisia gunman trained in Libya at same time as Bardo museum attackers](#), 30 June 2015

229 The Telegraph, [Isil 'wants its own navy for attacks on cruise ships in the Mediterranean'](#), 28 January 2016

230 [Q411](#)

231 The Libya Observer, [A huge number of vehicles and ammunition for Haftar's militias arrive in Tobruk](#), 24 April 2016

232 [Q414](#)

119. The provision of political and military support by regional actors to competing local factions has prolonged and intensified internal conflict in Libya.²³³ GNA Prime Minister Serraj has claimed that external interventions after 2011 led Libya to its current ruinous state. He pointed out that “All states must work only with legitimate institutions according to the Libya Political Agreement.”²³⁴ On 16 May 2016, a meeting of Foreign Ministers from 21 countries, the EU, the UN, the Arab League and the African Union issued a joint statement affirming their “commitment to ceasing support to and official contact with parallel institutions. The GNA is the sole legitimate recipient of international security assistance.”²³⁵ Signatories must ensure that their foreign policy is in line with the joint statement.

120. In June 2016, the United Nations Security Council belatedly recognised the effect of illegal arms shipments to Libya by authorising the EU to extend the terms of Operation Sophia [see paragraph 102] to include inspection “on the high seas off the coast of Libya, vessels bound to, or from Libya which they have reasonable grounds to believe are carrying arms or related material to or from Libya”.²³⁶ The Security Council Resolution was jointly introduced by the UK and France.

121. Regional actors have destabilised Libya and are fuelling internal conflict by exporting weapons and ammunition to proxy militias in contravention of the United Nations arms embargo. We welcome the Anglo-French initiative in the United Nations Security Council to extend the remit of Operation Sophia to include the inspection of suspicious vessels travelling to Libya. The FCO must continue collaborating with United Nations, European Union and NATO partners to maintain the arms embargo and work to influence states in the region to cease arms exports to Libyan militias.

Direct military support

122. The UK could directly support the GNA with British combat troops. British Special Forces have reportedly been deployed to Libya, where they apparently engaged in frontline combat in May 2016.²³⁷ It is difficult to square reports of British Special Forces participating in combat with the comment by the Secretary of State for Defence in May 2016 that

we do not intend to deploy ground forces in any combat role. Before engaging in any military operation in Libya, we would of course have to seek an invitation from the Libyan Government, and would also have to involve this Parliament.²³⁸

The GNA has not invited the UK to deploy combat troops in Libya and the UK Parliament has not considered the matter.

123. Special Forces operations in Libya are problematic because they necessarily involve supporting individual militias associated with the GNA rather than the GNA itself, which does not directly command units on the ground. For example, British Special Forces reportedly engaged in combat to support a militia from Misrata rather than a Libyan Army

²³³ Joseph Walker-Cousins (LIB0008) para 19

²³⁴ The Telegraph, [Libya badly needs assistance, not intervention](#), 15 May 2016

²³⁵ US Department of State, [Ministerial Meeting for Libya Joint Communiqué](#), 16 May 2016

²³⁶ United Nations, [Security Council Resolution 2292 \(2016\)](#), 14 June 2016

²³⁷ The Telegraph, [British special forces destroyed Islamic State trucks in Libya, say local troops](#), 26 May 2016

²³⁸ HC Deb, 29 February 2016, [col. 672 \[Commons Chamber\]](#)

unit directly commanded by the GNA.²³⁹ When we asked Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Tobias Ellwood whether British Special Forces had been deployed to Libya, he repeated the standard UK Government line that “no Minister ever comments on the role or otherwise of the Special Forces.”²⁴⁰ However, Mr Ellwood acknowledged that the RAF had flown missions over Libya in 2016.²⁴¹

124. Special Forces missions are not currently subject to parliamentary or public scrutiny, which increases the danger that such operations can become detached from political objectives. For example, French Special Forces apparently supported Khalifa Haftar's operations against Islamist militias in Benghazi. *Le Monde* reported in February 2016 that a detachment of French Special Forces was supporting the Libyan National Army from a base at Benghazi airport.²⁴² French President François Hollande confirmed that such a deployment had occurred when he announced that three soldiers had been killed when their helicopter was shot down during an operation near Benghazi in July 2016.²⁴³ In other words, French Special Forces facilitated the combat performance of a militia that rejected the authority of the GNA and that prolonged the Libyan civil war, despite the success of the GNA being a stated French Government foreign policy objective. Whilst not hindering the UK Government's ability to use Special Forces without sanction from or scrutiny by Parliament, this latitude should not be abused to circumvent the normal parliamentary authorisation for military deployments, especially when Special Forces are used in a role more usually performed by Regular Forces.

Training

125. Another way in which the UK could support the GNA is by training new Libyan troops commanded by the GNA to form an effective national army. When we visited North Africa in March 2016, we were told that the UK Government was contemplating deploying British troops in Libya to train Libyan soldiers as part of the Libyan International Assistance Mission.²⁴⁴ The proposed deployment did not take place. The deployment of British troops to a training role in Libya would be problematic, because Libya is currently experiencing a multi-front civil war. Furthermore, the presence of British troops could provide ISIL in Libya with an accessible Western target.

126. The British Army trained some Libyan cadets in the UK in 2014, but this initiative was cancelled when the Libyan trainees committed a number of serious offences in the Cambridgeshire village of Bassingbourn.²⁴⁵ It might be possible for the British Army to train Libyan troops in another state in North Africa, which would require the agreement of the host country.

127. *UK forces might play a useful role in training the Libyan Army and security forces, but any such deployment must be configured to ensure that it does not boost anti-Western rhetoric or provide ISIL with a relatively accessible target. British troops should not be*

239 The Telegraph, [British special forces destroyed Islamic State trucks in Libya, say local troops](#), 26 May 2016

240 [Q512](#)

241 [Q515](#)

242 Reuters, [French advisers helping Libyan forces in Benghazi](#), 25 February 2016

243 The Guardian, [Three French special forces soldiers die in Libya](#), 20 July 2016

244 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Chair to Foreign Secretary](#), 15 March 2016

245 FCO ([LIB0012](#)) para 20

deployed to Libya in a training role until the GNA has established political control, stabilised internal security and made a formal request to the UK Government for such assistance, which should then be considered by the UK Parliament.

Conclusions and recommendations

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973

1. France led the international community in advancing the case for military intervention in Libya in February and March 2011. UK policy followed decisions taken in France. (Paragraph 23)

The evidence base: intelligence

2. The possibility that militant extremist groups would attempt to benefit from the rebellion should not have been the preserve of hindsight. Libyan connections with transnational militant extremist groups were known before 2011, because many Libyans had participated in the Iraq insurgency and in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda. (Paragraph 28)

The evidence base: our assessment

3. We have seen no evidence that the UK Government carried out a proper analysis of the nature of the rebellion in Libya. It may be that the UK Government was unable to analyse the nature of the rebellion in Libya due to incomplete intelligence and insufficient institutional insight and that it was caught up in events as they developed. It could not verify the actual threat to civilians posed by the Gaddafi regime; it selectively took elements of Muammar Gaddafi's rhetoric at face value; and it failed to identify the militant Islamist extremist element in the rebellion. UK strategy was founded on erroneous assumptions and an incomplete understanding of the evidence. (Paragraph 38)

The basis for intervention: did it change?

4. The UK's intervention in Libya was reactive and did not comprise action in pursuit of a strategic objective. This meant that a limited intervention to protect civilians drifted into a policy of regime change by military means. (Paragraph 49)

The basis for intervention: were political alternatives explored?

5. Political options were available if the UK Government had adhered to the spirit of Resolution 1973, implemented its original campaign plan and influenced its coalition allies to pause military action when Benghazi was secured in March 2011. Political engagement might have delivered civilian protection, regime change and reform at lesser cost to the UK and to Libya. If political engagement had been unsuccessful, the UK and its coalition allies would not have lost anything. Instead, the UK Government focused exclusively on military intervention. In particular, we saw no evidence that it tried to exploit former Prime Minister Tony Blair's contacts and influence with the Gaddafi regime. (Paragraph 57)

Decision making

6. We note former Prime Minister David Cameron's decisive role when the National Security Council discussed intervention in Libya. We also note that Lord Richards implicitly dissociated himself from that decision in his oral evidence to this inquiry. The Government must commission an independent review of the operation of the NSC. This review should consider the merits of introducing a formal mechanism to allow non-ministerial NSC members to request prime ministerial direction to undertake actions agreed in the NSC. It should be informed by the conclusions of the Iraq Inquiry and examine whether the weaknesses in governmental decision-making in relation to the Iraq intervention in 2003 have been addressed by the introduction of the NSC. (Paragraph 66)

Stabilisation

7. The Libyan state weakened its own limited institutional capacity by paying militias to provide security. The growth of state-funded militias with local rather than national loyalties was a key destabilising factor after 2011. (Paragraph 72)
8. The FCO should lead the international community to review whether the United Nations is the appropriate body to co-ordinate stabilisation and reconstruction in a post-conflict environment and whether it has the appropriate resources, and if not to identify alternatives that could be more effective. Such a review is a practical and urgent requirement, because the United Nations might be asked to co-ordinate a similar mission in Syria, Yemen or Iraq in the near future. (Paragraph 75)

Reconstruction: resources

9. The level of funding provided by the international community and the UK was not the decisive factor in the collapse of the Libyan state. Nevertheless a key problem was institutional incapacity to absorb financial and other resources provided by the international community, and this is something that should have been foreseen and planned for. (Paragraph 83)

Securing weapons

10. The international community's inability to secure weapons abandoned by the Gaddafi regime fuelled instability in Libya and enabled and increased terrorism across North and West Africa and the Middle East. The UK Government correctly identified the need to secure weapons immediately after the 2011 Libyan civil war, but it and its international partners took insufficient action to achieve that objective. However, it is probable that none of the states that intervened in Libya would have been prepared to commit the necessary military and political resources to secure stocks of weapons and ammunition. That consideration should have informed their calculation to intervene. (Paragraph 88)

A failure of strategy

11. We recognise that the damaging experience of post-war intervention in Iraq engendered an understandable reluctance to impose solutions in Libya. However, because the UK along with France led the military intervention, it had a particular responsibility to support Libyan economic and political reconstruction, which became an impossible task because of the failure to establish security on the ground. (Paragraph 92)

Migration: Economic migrants and refugees

12. The FCO must set out and re-examine the evidence base underpinning its assertion in October 2014 that “planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean ...create an unintended ‘pull factor’, encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing”. It must also assess whether planned search and rescue operations encouraged migrants to cross the Mediterranean in the first half of 2016 in the light of people smugglers’ current methods of operation in relation to international search and rescue. It should support Italian and wider European efforts to secure the agreement of countries of origin to accept, where possible, the repatriation of irregular migrants who have arrived in Europe but do not meet asylum criteria, as well as the need to tackle the main factors fuelling the desire to migrate. Given its role in the conflict and subsequent destabilisation in Libya, the UK has a particular responsibility in relation to migrants and refugees, an issue which has been exacerbated by the collapse of the Libyan state. (Paragraph 105)

ISIL in Libya

13. While defeating all manifestations of violent extremism should remain a UK Government priority, the primary objective in Libya should be to support a central authority that can deliver greater stability, address the root causes of extremism and act as an effective partner in the common struggle against militant groups. (Paragraph 117)

Arms embargo

14. Regional actors have destabilised Libya and are fuelling internal conflict by exporting weapons and ammunition to proxy militias in contravention of the United Nations arms embargo. We welcome the Anglo-French initiative in the United Nations Security Council to extend the remit of Operation Sophia to include the inspection of suspicious vessels travelling to Libya. The FCO must continue collaborating with United Nations, European Union and NATO partners to maintain the arms embargo and work to influence states in the region to cease arms exports to Libyan militias. (Paragraph 121)

Training

15. UK forces might play a useful role in training the Libyan Army and security forces, but any such deployment must be configured to ensure that it does not boost anti-

Western rhetoric or provide ISIL with a relatively accessible target. British troops should not be deployed to Libya in a training role until the GNA has established political control, stabilised internal security and made a formal request to the UK Government for such assistance, which should then be considered by the UK Parliament. (Paragraph 127)

Glossary

FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNC	General National Congress
HOR	House of Representatives
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LIA	Libyan Investment Authority
MANPAD	man-portable air defence system
NSA	National Security Adviser
NSC	National Security Council
NTC	National Transitional Council
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya

Formal Minutes

Tuesday 6 September 2016

Members present:

Crispin Blunt in the Chair

Mr John Baron

Daniel Kawczynski

Ann Clwyd

Yasmin Qureshi

Mike Gapes

Andrew Rosindell

Stephen Gethins

Nadhim Zahawi

Adam Holloway

Draft Report (*Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 109 read and agreed to.

Paragraph 110 read.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the paragraph.—(*Stephen Gethins*.)

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 1

Noes, 7

Stephen Gethins

Mr John Baron

Ann Clwyd

Adam Holloway

Daniel Kawczynski

Yasmin Qureshi

Andrew Rosindell

Nadhim Zahawi

Paragraphs 111 to 127 read and agreed to.

Summary and Glossary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 7 September at 6.00 pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 13 October 2015

Question number

Professor George Joffé, Visiting Professor, King's College London, and
Alison Pargeter, Analyst

[Q1–86](#)

Tuesday 27 October 2015

Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, former UK Ambassador to Libya and Chairman
of the Libyan British Business Council

[Q87–147](#)

Tuesday 1 December 2015

Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond, former Foreign Secretary, and **Rt Hon Dr
Liam Fox MP**, former Defence Secretary

[Q148–174](#)

Friday 11 December 2015

Rt Hon Tony Blair

[Q175–232](#)

Tuesday 19 January 2016, morning session

Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP

[Q233–269](#)

Rt Hon Lord Hague of Richmond

[Q270–313](#)

Tuesday 19 January 2016, afternoon session

Lord Richards of Herstmonceux

[Q314–376](#)

Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP

[Q377–407](#)

Tuesday 9 February 2016, morning session

Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy Director-General, Royal United Services
Institute, **Professor Patrick Porter**, Professor of Strategic Studies, University
of Exeter, and **Chris Stephen**, Libya Correspondent, The Guardian

[Q408–448](#)

Tuesday 9 February 2016, afternoon session

Jonathan Powell, UK Special Envoy to Libya

[Q449–496](#)

Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, **Peter Millett**, HM Ambassador, Libya and **Sally Axworthy**, former Joint Head of North Africa Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Q497–585](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

LIB numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Adam Smith International ([LIB0015](#))
- 2 Associate Professor Adrian Gallagher ([LIB0003](#))
- 3 Baheej Fathalla ([LIB0016](#))
- 4 British Council ([LIB0010](#))
- 5 Campaign Against Arms Trade ([LIB0011](#))
- 6 Dr Victoria Honeyman ([LIB0006](#))
- 7 European Council on Foreign Relations ([LIB0009](#))
- 8 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([LIB0012](#))
- 9 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([LIB0013](#))
- 10 Libyan Constitutional Union ([LIB0002](#))
- 11 Living Earth Foundation ([LIB0007](#))
- 12 Mr Joseph Walker-Cousins ([LIB0008](#))
- 13 Mr Nasir Ghalib ([LIB0001](#))
- 14 Mr Roger Nunn ([LIB0014](#))
- 15 Professor Wyn Rees ([LIB0004](#))
- 16 Wolfgang Puztai ([LIB0005](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2015–16

First Report	The FCO and the 2015 Spending Review	HC 467 (HC 816)
Second Report	The extension of offensive British military operations to Syria	HC 457
Third Report	The UK's role in the war against ISIL following the Cessation of Hostilities in Syria in February 2016	HC 683
Fourth Report	The FCO's administration and funding of its human rights work overseas	HC 860
Fifth Report	Implications of the referendum on EU membership for the UK's role in the world	HC 545
First Special Report	The FCO and the 2015 Spending Review: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 816

Session 2016–17

First Report	The UK's role in the economic war against ISIL	HC 121
Second Report	Equipping the Government for Brexit	HC 431
First Special Report	The UK's role in the war against ISIL following the Cessation of Hostilities in Syria in February 2016: Government response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16	HC 209
Second Special Report	The FCO's administration and funding of its human rights work overseas: Government response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 545