

Statement of Deborah K. Jones
Ambassador-Designate to Libya
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
May 7, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and a special thank you to the honorable Senator from my home state of New Mexico, Senator Tom Udall, for introducing me to this venerable committee. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for their confidence and trust in nominating me to serve as ambassador to Libya. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support and understanding, and especially my lovely daughters Ana and Isabella Olson, who are with me today; Ana and Izzy have always been good troopers and great sports as they've accompanied their parents overseas or otherwise accepted the sacrifices our commitment to serve has meant for them. They've also kept us honest along the way. I am so proud of them.

Two years on, the euphoria that accompanied the uprising of the Libyan people and the fall of Qadhafi and his brutal dictatorship has been replaced by a sober recognition of the enormity and depth of the challenges facing Libya's leaders and its people.

As we have witnessed throughout the region, democratic transitions are notoriously difficult, and political progress is organic, not linear. Uprisings can be ignited and fueled by electrons, but we know from our own, often turbulent, history that nations are built on the brick and mortar of sometimes painful compromise and reconciliation. Libya does enjoy several advantages compared to other Arab states recently affected by dramatic political transition, including a relatively small population and significant oil wealth. However, we should not underestimate the effects that more than four decades of Colonel Qadhafi's rule had on the country and society. Colonel Qadhafi deliberately dismantled the country's institutions, blocked the emergence of civil society organizations, and quashed any independent thought or initiative. He relied on a network of corruption that effectively created a vacuum from which Libya's brave new leaders must build democratic institutions, consolidate control over militias (some clearly hijacked by those whose purposes have nothing to do with the wellbeing of the Libyan people), ensure that all Libyans are represented and respected in the new government, and dispense with the country's wealth fairly and transparently.

The good news is that, despite these difficult challenges, courageous and determined Libyans, including many who've given up comfortable lives abroad to return to rebuild their nation, have achieved notable successes: a reconstituted government is paying salaries and providing essential goods and

services to the Libyan people; last July's elections for the General National Council were remarkably successful and have elevated technocrats over ideologues, forming Libya's first democratic institution in over four decades; and Libya's oil production – important to the stability of world oil prices – has reached pre-conflict levels, relying largely on the efforts of Libyan nationals. The inherent optimism of Libyan patriots has fueled these developments, which we saw on display when thousands of Libyans peacefully celebrated the second anniversary of their revolution on February 17 this year.

That said, very serious challenges remain, first and foremost the need for Libya's central governing authority to strengthen its capacity to assert sovereign monopoly over security throughout the country and along its vast and porous borders and to consolidate its democratic foundations. Flows of loose weapons, including MANPADS, from Libyan territory into conflict zones throughout the broader region must be staunch. The disarming, demobilizing and integration of the revolutionary brigades and militias whose efforts were so critical to the defeat of Qadhafi's dictatorship is essential for establishing a national, cohesive security apparatus with clear lines of "command and control." This will in turn enable the defeat of volatile and deadly rogue militias, and prevent a repeat of the tragedy in Benghazi, where Ambassador Stevens and three other of our finest public servants were senselessly killed; as the President has committed, the perpetrators must be brought

to justice, and if confirmed, I will work closely with the Libyan government to see that justice realized.

Ultimately, lasting security and domestic stability will emerge from an inclusive constitutional process that delineates clear lines of authority and offers protection to all Libyans, and a reformed judicial system capable of garnering public confidence and administering a comprehensive national transitional justice strategy to deal with past Qadhafi-era abuses and current criminality. The strategic patience that accompanies institution building, however, must also accommodate the urgent requirements to fill a security vacuum that otherwise will be exploited by invasive, foreign elements, including Al Qaeda's affiliates, whose efforts to establish a safe haven must be denied. In short, Libya's national garden requires careful tending during this fragile period.

We have proposed a modest but important package of technical and other assistance for Libya during this tenuous transitional period. It is fair for the American people to ask why, at a time of our own fiscal restraint and given Libya's relative wealth. It remains in our strong interest to fund a limited number of activities of immediate concern to Libyan security and larger regional security and to lay the proper foundations for Libya's transition to a democratic state. Libya's leaders have asserted their willingness to pay their own way, and indeed they are tapping their petroleum revenues and assets of the previous regime. As the Libyan government evolves and increases its

capacity and gains experience, for example, with the steps needed to procure and contract, the need for U.S. and other external funding will drop away. Implementing these programs now gives us the best opportunity to help support and strengthen a Libyan government that can be a long-term partner of the United States and a stable actor in the region. Among these U.S.-funded activities are programs aimed at preventing weapons proliferation; providing advice on transitional governance issues of immediate concern such as border security, rule of law, and human rights, and promoting a vibrant civil society. This seed money will pay substantial dividends if wisely husbanded.

It is in our national interest, both strategic and ideological, as well as Libya's, to see it fulfill its potential as a stable and prosperous democracy, with a fully-developed and active civil society and the full integration and participation of all elements of Libyan society and geographic areas, with respect for human rights and international norms. Historic rivalries between traditional centers of culture and governance can produce a healthy competitive yet conjoined national dynamism and create synergies of national opportunity. Libya's development of its full national capacity and sovereignty will enhance our own security and economic well-being through regional security cooperation, the steady production of hydrocarbons essential to continued global economic growth and trade, and increased opportunities for U.S. businesses to partner in Libya's renewal

and development. A successful democratic transition in Libya, challenges notwithstanding, can be an engine for growth supporting transitions taking place in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt.

There remains an extraordinary reservoir of goodwill for the U.S. in Libya given our support for the toppling of Qadhafi and our engagement following the restoration of diplomatic relations, going back to Ambassador Cretz' arrival in 2008. I have been touched by the emails I received from private Libyan citizens following the White House announcement of my nomination, expressing their deep sorrow over the heinous attack on Ambassador Stevens and our fallen colleagues and assuring me of their hospitality and desire to welcome and cooperate with a new U.S. ambassador. I am well aware of the unique challenges I will face in the current environment. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with this Congress in carrying on the excellent work of both Gene and Chris and their teams in forging strong ties between our governments and people, students and business communities, women and minorities, leveraging our instruments of national power, and all the connections and tools at my disposal, in coordination with our allies and like-minded powers, who share our interest in seeing a stable and prosperous Libya. American's engagement with Libya originates long before the 2011 revolution, and includes, for example, our historic cooperation during World War II and the Cold War, as well as our

cooperative efforts in developing their oil and gas sector since 1959.

Last but not least, I am deeply conscious of the responsibility I have as Chief of Mission for the safety and security of the approximately 4,000 Americans residing in Libya, and for that of those individuals attached to our mission there, as we strive to balance safety considerations with a deep desire to engage and do the work of the American people, as expressed by members of this Congress and this Administration. In this regard, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues in Diplomatic Security, and to our U.S. Marine Corps, other armed forces members and other U.S. government agency colleagues whose heroic efforts make it possible for us to continue our work there.

Honorable Members of this Committee: It has been my privilege and great honor to have spent 31 years in the service of my country, working with nine Administrations, to champion America's interests and values and expand the reach of freedom through the conduct of diplomacy with nations at war and at peace, most in some sort of political transition, some in poverty and others enjoying great wealth. Should you choose to confirm me, it will be my honor and my sworn duty to lead our mission in Libya as we meet the challenges of establishing and consolidating the foundations of a strong, prosperous and democratic Libya allied with the United States in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.