Participant name: Chargee d’affaires Jeremy Berndt

Participant organization: US EMB Libya

Notes:

US is driving the effort for reform in Libya. There has been some effort to call out the actions of Russia at the UNSC diplomatically, and the Africa Corps is considered as malign as Wagner. There is just less deniability by the Russian MoD.

Turks have a lot of engagement with the western authorities, but they are willing to engage with Haftar in the east, which is a big difference than where they were in 2019. It seems like they have an appetite for stabilization.

There have been stories about resettling migrants, and Russians are behind it.

But China is coming in now. They are a matter of concern. Already in via telecoms so they can pressure the government into regaining contracts they had prior to 2011. Taiwan had interest and a window of opportunity for economic investment, but they were blocked by the PRC. US would like to see more engagement from them, but at the same time would need more help from the US than the other way around.

Recommendation: pretty small engagement with Libya would still be a significant win for the U.S. – and that’s a huge contrast from the embrace of Russia and China and what they got from it. In the far future, there could be military academies, exchange programs, training, FMS. Etc. Right now a fairly modest presence could be made in Tripoli. Libyans are eager to have more cooperation with the U.S. and an aperture to reduce their military dependence on Russia. There is a lot of overlap between the new administration’s beliefs on burden sharing and priorities, and what the Libyans want, potential, and can offer.

Decline in security force assistance won’t change much in Libya, but assistance will of course negatively affect the migrants. We could shift more economic burden to the Libyan government, yet there doesn’t seem to be any interest in engaging with them about this.

We offer already some technical assistance to their Central Bank, support their national oil program, a program of disinformation with the BBC. But a twitter / Elon Musk affiliated account mentioned the BBC program and made an alleged link with DEI, which made it a scandal.

Argument to keep GFA into law was to align and streamline all US strategies into a single objective of stabilization and the 3Ds: but development doesn’t seem to be a priority for this administration. GFA is also seen as not brand-able even if it is put back online.

The U.S. is seen as a predictable ally with UK, Italy, and Turkey, but the engagement with Libya needs more. The current border training is consistent with the arms embargo whereas other European partners don’t care that much about the restrictions. There, the Diplo-Defense ties could do more.