

Embassy of Libya



Washington, D.C.

Newsletter Feb. 2019

Foreign Minister of Libya, H.E. Mohamed T. Syala attends “Conference Meeting of the Ministers of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS” hosted by the U.S. Department of State.



February 6, 2019

Foreign Minister Mohamed Taher Syala participated in the Conference “Meeting of the Ministers of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS” hosted by U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, at the U.S. Department of State Washington, D.C.

The Global Coalition met for in-depth discussions on the impending territorial defeat of ISIS. Ministers discussed the next phase of the campaign with focus on protecting against a

resurgence of ISIS through stabilization and security assistance. Ministers also discussed important next steps in degrading ISIS’s global networks and affiliates outside Iraq and Syria.

The Global Coalition will continue its stabilization efforts to facilitate the safe and voluntary return home of those who have been displaced by violence.

(NED)- National Endowment for Democracy - Roundtable Discussion “Opportunities for Strategic Engagement to Address Libya’s Political Crisis”



- ◆ **February 7, 2019 (NED) National Endowment for Democracy hosted a roundtable discussion featuring H.E. Mohamed Taher Syala, Foreign Minister of Libya, roundtable was moderated by Mr. Christopher Walker, Vice President of Studies Analysis. The attendees included President of (NED) Mr. Carl Gershman, U.S. Department of State officials, U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Members, think tanks, NGOs, university scholars.**

Below: (NEDs) Release

Libya’s progress towards a functional, legitimate, and unified democratic state is plagued by political, security, and economic challenges. Locally organized armed extremist and transnational terrorist groups, including the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), remain active in Libya. Additionally, armed nonstate actors and human trafficking networks exploit the country’s swaths of unsecured territory. Conflict, instability and weak governance in Libya have taken a severe toll on the country’s economy. What little stability there is in Libya comes from the country’s significant energy resources, which are increasingly threatened by non-state actors and militia groups. While the recent Palermo conference brought Libya’s Tripoli and Tobruk governments into agreement on a possible United Nations-led conference in January 2019 and elections in

June 2019, the path to a legitimate constitution and united government remains tenuous.

Libya needs stronger institutions to sustain what could be a nascent democracy. Libyan officials and the international community share concerns about remaining extremists, the weakness of state institutions, and flows of migrants and contraband within and across Libya’s largely un-policed borders. A successful resolution to these issues is critical to security, political stability, and economic development of Libya and the MENA region. Comprehensive and coordinated engagement from international partners, including the United States, at this critical juncture can play a significant role

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

in marshaling international support and resources to advance Libyan-led solutions to the country's unresolved, systemic crises.

Among the questions addressed at this meeting were how can the international community, including the United States, support the emergence of a unified national government as a way of reducing transnational threats posed by terrorists and other actors?

What are the options to move political actors away from zero-sum political calculations that have thus far outweighed efforts to find common ground and achieve breakthroughs? And what steps should be prioritized by the international community, including civil society organizations, donor institutions and the private sector, to achieve meaningful progress on a sustainable economic development model for Libya?



Private Meeting:

H.E. Mohamed Syala,
Foreign Minister of Libya

Mr. Carl Gershman,
President, NED

Ambassador Wafa
Bughaighis

Mr. Chris Walker, VP, NED





Assistant Secretary Francis R. Fannon, Foreign Minister Mohamed T. Syala, Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis, Director Abdurrahman Elganas, and accompanying delegation met for a roundtable discussion at the U.S. Department of State.

- ◆ **February 8, 2019**, Foreign Minister Mohamed T. Syala met with Assistant Secretary Francis R. Fannon for the Bureau of Energy Resources at the U.S. Department of State. Minister Syala discussed the critical intersection of energy and national security in Libya, he also discussed Libya's opportunities for strengthening the U.S. Libya framework to ensure Libya's energy resources are used to increase economic growth and contribute to stabilizing world markets and prices of oil and gas. To that, opportunities for investment in the oil and gas industry in Libya were also discussed.

◆ **February 8, 2019**

Foreign Minister Mohamed T. Syala, Ambassador Charles Reis, Vice President of Rand Corporation, Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis & accompanying delegation met at Rand Corporation for roundtable discussions.



- ◆ Foreign Minister Syala engaged in simultaneous official meetings with White House, National Security Council and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Kathryn Wheelbarger, at the U.S. Pentagon before the conclusion of his official visit to Washington, D.C.

“Minister of Interior Fathi Bushagha visits Washington, D.C.”



◆ February 12, 2019

Minister of Interior Fathi Bashagha, Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis and accompanying delegation met with Assistant Secretary Polaschik, Deputy Assistant Secretaries from Bureaus of International Narcotics and Law Enforcements at the U.S. Department of State.

Libyan Interior Minister Fathi Bashagaa met during his visit with officials from wide range of U.S. Government including State Department, Home Land Security, Justice Department and Department of Defense.

Topics discussed ranged from Libyan government’s priorities related to capacity building of the Interior Ministry, counterterrorism, fighting organized crime, border and ports’ securities, Human Rights.

Discussions also included efforts to identify and assist vulnerable population and illegal migrants. International cooperation needed for screening procedures for protection concerns and to ensure protecting their Human Rights.

Libyan government’s priorities for improving the existing procedures for detention and processing of migrants according to Libyan laws were discussed. International partnership needed to hold perpetrators and Human Traffickers belonging to international organized crime networks accountable were also discussed.

U.S. conveyed strong support to Minister’s efforts and discussed the most productive way

for the U.S. to engage and provide assistance on these issues.



February 15, 2019 Minister of Interior Fathi Bashagha, Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis and accompanying delegation met with the United States Department of Justice Administration.



◆ **February 21, 2019**

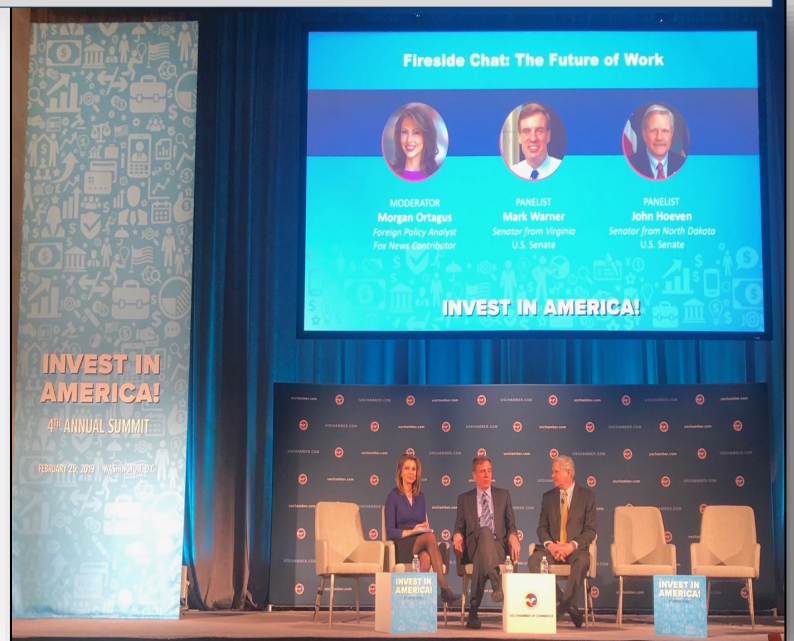
Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis and colleague African Ambassadors were invited by the Honorable Kay Coles James, President of the Heritage Foundation. Fruitful and productive conversations were conducted with esteemed guests including policy makers, prominent conservative leaders and business community.



◆ Above photograph by: Mr. Stephen Bobb, Meridian International Foundation

◆ **February 22, 2019**

Ambassador Bughaighis was delighted to meet Mr. Gary Richard Herbert, Utah Governor as he and Ambassador Holliday President of the Meridian International Center came together in front of Ambassadors from around the world to discuss how Governors can develop successful relationships with countries from around the world also discussed the enormous economic successes of Utah. Ambassador Bughaighis looks forward to the opportunity to visit Utah in the very near future.



◆ **February 25, 2019** Ambassador Bughaighis was invited to the “Invest in America 4th Annual Summit” hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

.....“Motivating conversations shared with Senators and Governors”.



Freer Gallery of Art, Meyer Auditorium, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

On Heritage Protection Efforts

On February 23, 2018 the United States and the Government of Libya signed a historic agreement to close the American border to Libyan blood antiquities.

In commemorating the one year anniversary of signing the memorandum of understanding, Ambassador Bughaighis was honored to participate in part of a public event panel hosted by the Council of American Overseas Research Centers in Washington, partnering with the Antiquity Coalition and the Smithsonian's Free Sackler Galleries to raise awareness and discuss the Responses and policies of the U.S. and the International Community to the threats facing the Cultural Heritage in many countries in the Middle East and North Africa region impacted by the political and security conflicts.

Given that Libya continues to face many of the same challenges, Ambassador Bughaighis provided some additional perspectives on issues related to cultural heritage protection efforts and antiquities trafficking and especially how closing U.S. borders to Libyan antiquities has impacted preservation efforts.

Libya's cultural heritage encompasses world history with its prehistoric rock art, ancient Punic, Greek and Roman ruins and masterpieces from the Byzantine, Medieval and Ottoman periods.

It also spans the faiths of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Criminals and terrorist groups took further advantage of the security vacuum and are stripping Libya of this birthright and using

(Continued on page 8)

these items to fund their deadly violence, further destabilizing Libya and the world.

Libya's pillaged artifacts are being smuggled alongside other contraband such as guns, drugs and even people across the deserts and across the Mediterranean to Europe, and -yes- across the Atlantic to the United States.

Through the Agreement signed one year ago now, the American art market- the world's largest -has shut down to Libya stolen cultural objects.

Furthermore, Libya and the United States are working to cut off a crucial source of criminal and terrorist financing. At the same time with this agreement, Libya has also built a bridge by proudly committing itself to increased cultural, educational, and scholarly exchange with the United States.

However, Libya prefers that the international visitors have the opportunity to flock to such wonders as Cyrene, Leptis Magna, and Sabratha to see these amazing artifacts where they belong. Hope is that peace will make that possible soon.

Acting pursuant to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, Libya believes all affected countries should unify efforts and call upon other market nations in Europe, the Gulf, and Asia to follow Washington's lead, and close their own borders to conflict antiquities. Libya likewise call upon neighbors to join Libya and Egypt in partnering with the United States on bilateral agreements to close the world's largest market to all looted art and antiquities from North Africa and the Middle East.

Noteworthy, some of the greatest Successes of signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the Gov. of the US and Gov. of Libya was adopting an action plan 2018-2022, of which the Expected Results are:

- ◆ Higher rates of law enforcement interdiction of trafficked Libyan cultural objects.
- ◆ Building capacity and data resources to better protect Libyan cultural objects.
- ◆ Wider public outreach resulting in better protection of Libyan heritage sites and objects.
- ◆ Increased lawful access to Libyan cultural heritage.



Ambassador Wafa Bughaighis continues regular meetings with the Administration and Congress Members to update on developments and continues dialogue on the most productive way for the U.S. engagement and assistance.

EMBASSY OF LIBYA RECEIVED A DELEGATION PARTICIPATING IN THE “SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL MODEL AFRICAN UNION”



February 21 – 24, 2019

The Libyan Embassy officials received a delegation accompanied by a Faculty Advisor from UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL who represented Libya in the “17th Annual International Model African Union Conference” held at the Howard University Washington, D.C. on February 21 thru 24, 2019.

The Model provided a unique opportunity to study Africa and the African Union through simulation augmented by briefings at African Embassies in Washington, D.C. The questions presented by the Committee

were interesting and focused in Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, Peace and Security, Pan-Africanism, Social matters, Economic matters and Executive Council.

The simulation program is designed to increase awareness of the functions and activities of the African Union as well as to highlight major economic, political and security issues in Africa. Several universities in Africa, Canada and the United States participated in the same program.