

What They Are Saying: Top Policy Experts Call for Renewed U.S. Diplomacy & Support for Political Process in Libya

Thomas Hill, Unites States Institute of Peace: “Since 2012, the U.S. has been largely disengaged from Libya, but it’s because of this engagement that many Libyans now see the U.S. as a potential honest broker, capable of organizing the international community around a peaceful solution in Libya and marginalizing potential spoilers, many of whom are U.S. allies. [...] Some [external actors] have welcomed Hiftar’s military campaign and perceive him as a bulwark against Islamic extremism and terrorist organizations. This is a gross misreading of the man and those within his LNA forces. As we’ve seen from the LNA’s campaign in southern Libya, the LNA is capable of horrific human rights abuses. If Hiftar is encouraged to continue his campaign we should expect to see more bloodshed, a new humanitarian crisis, and new opportunities for ISIS to emerge.” ([Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Middle East, North Africa, and International Terrorism](#), 05.15.19)

Dr. James Carafano & Joshua Meservey, Heritage Foundation: “As unpalatable as it may be, the United States should become more involved in one of the world’s most destabilizing conflicts. [...] This terrible muddle highlights the need for American leadership. The U.S. is likely the only country with the heft and relationships with the many concerned parties to get them to act in concert in Libya. It should work to persuade the different actors to pressure their Libyan clients to seek a genuine political agreement, and then to hold them accountable to it. [...] The U.S. is the only country with enough standing to pressure effectively all players to reach some agreement on how to engage with Libya.” – ([The Hill: America needs to stabilize Libya](#), 10.19.18)

Ben Fishman, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: “Now is the time to re-energize U.S. diplomacy on Libya. Secretary Pompeo should call Haftar’s principal supporters and warn that if Haftar does not pull back his forces, he is subjecting himself to U.S. sanctions – under an authority the Trump team twice has applied against individuals who “threaten the peace, security or stability of Libya.” Those sanctions would be strengthened if the EU threatened similar actions, and would isolate Haftar from being feted in Paris or Rome. His affront to the international community and the U.N.-backed peace process must have consequences.” – ([The Hill: With Interests in Libya Under Threat, U.S. Must Adopt Urgency](#), 04.15.19)

Emily Estelle, American Enterprise Institute: “Libya’s combustion threatens U.S. interests and allies while providing opportunities to enemies and adversaries. The Salafi-jihadi movement will be first to benefit. Russia, also, has spotted the opportunity of UN weakness and European division in Libya and is attempting to broker a favorable peace deal that will advance Moscow’s interests. The U.S. and its allies must pursue an effective strategy to resolve Libya’s political crisis, else the waves of violence—and all their accompanying dangers—will continue.” ([Critical Threats: Al Qaeda and the Islamic State Will Be the Winners of the Libyan Civil War](#), 04.10.19)

Dr. Frederic Wehrey, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace & Amb. (Ret.) Jeffrey Feltman, The Brookings Institution: “Although the United States has officially backed the Tripoli Government of National Accord, continued American ambivalence on Libya or, worse, active support for General Hifter, could push Libya into greater conflict. This disorder could strengthen the Islamic State, which carried out a spate of attacks in Libya last year. [...] In the current crisis, similar American resolve is needed again. The Trump administration should issue a public censure of General Hifter and press for sanctions – both its own and through the United Nations – against the general for subverting efforts at a peaceful settlement and violating Security Council resolutions.” – ([CEIP: Libya Is Entering Another Civil War. America Can Stop It.](#), 04.05.19)

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