

RELEASE IN PART B6

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Sent: Wednesday, May 4, 2011 8:49 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: SER meeting with al-Khatib

Fyi - interesting tidbits.

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Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 08:44 PM
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Subject: SER meeting with al-Khatib

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All - Ambassador Rice met with UN Envoy Al-Khatib today to hear his latest thinking on achieving a ceasefire and political transition in Libya. Hope this readout is helpful to you. – Erica

Al-Khatib made the following key points:

- Al-Khatib said that he was acting on the basis of UNSCR 1973, which does not make any reference to regime change. But, it does speak about the aspirations of the Libyan people. In that regard, the Libyan opposition (and much of the international community), believe Qadhafi has lost the legitimacy of his people and there is no place for him in Libya's future. The question they are asking is not if Qadhafi departs, but how and when.
- Absent of any feeling of desperation it is hard to see Qadhafi would agree to depart, let alone effect an unconditional ceasefire and pull-back from the main cities, especially not if there is an expectation that, once there is a ceasefire, then efforts will turn to his departure.
- That leads Al-Khatib to conclude that a creative way needs to be found to engineer Qadhafi's departure:
 - A ceasefire could be declared that includes the withdrawal of all Qadhafi's forces and snipers from the major cities. Then time and space (several weeks not but months) should be provided to verify the withdrawal and allow the population to rise up. If freed of the intimidation of snipers on every corner, they would likely turn against the regime and sympathize with, if not join the opposition.
 - Thereafter, a national conference should be convened that would exclude Qadhafi and be run by someone acceptable to all sides. This would be a must for the opposition. This conference, with strong support from the international community, would agree on a political transition path.
 - Qadhafi would depart after conclusion of a such an agreement, which would provide him (and the Africans) with the face-saving required to step down.
- Amb. Rice indicated three main concerns with this approach, off-the-cuff:

- How would we know that the ceasefire to which he agreed was not really just a strategic pause to regroup and rearm, only to break it down the road?
 - How could we conceive that those representing Tripoli at the national conference would do anything other than Qadhafi's bidding, if he remained in power (and capable of threatening their families)?
 - And even if the national conference managed to reach agreement on an interim government that excluded Qadhafi, how could we be sure that he would honor its results and, indeed, step down?
- Al-Khatib acknowledged these legitimate concerns and concurred that efforts needed to be continued in parallel, under any scenario, to unify the various plans for a ceasefire and political transition and to create a unified diplomatic international front to encourage Qadhafi to step down. It would be especially helpful to get the Africans on board and welcomed U.S. efforts to that end (including this latest informal initiative by Amb. Rice among PRs in NYC). For his part, Al-Khatib was willing to work closely with the African Union and had tried to incorporate elements of their road-map into his thinking.
 - Al-Khatib added that he would continue to deliver the message bluntly to those with whom he is meeting around Qadhafi that 'their leader' had lost the support of his people and that the future of the country could no longer include him in power. In response to Amb. Rice's question, Al-Khatib said he intended to say the same thing directly to Qadhafi if given an opening to see him.
 - Al-Khatib is considering a visit to Tripoli next week and believes Qadhafi and his people are studying his latest statements to the UNSC in order to determine whether to see him. (Al-Khatib mentioned that Qadhafi had sent a message to him, following the bombing of his compound and death of his son and grand-children, urging the UN to protest the attack as an affront to the protection of civilians. Al-Khatib said that he did not respond to the substance of the message, but did reply with condolences for his loss and the suffering of all Libyans and urged him to stop military action).
 - At a lunch the previous day with Al-Khatib and the Ambassadors of France, the UK, US (Di Carlo) and Lebanon, the PRs of UK and France expressed strong support for Al-Khatib traveling to Libya next week and availing of any opportunity to meet with Q. They were welcoming of Al-Khatib's thinking but the UK also stressed importance of preserving two very important red lines: Qadhafi must not be on the other side of the table negotiating; and, there must not be any ceasefire that is not accompanied by a political process.
 - At the same lunch, the Lebanese PR agreed that a creative way would be needed to allow for Qadhafi's exit. He also fully supported the efforts of the UN Special Envoy, whom he believed needed to insist that all other organizations and individual countries coordinate their efforts with him, rather than launching competing or parallel plans on their own. The Lebanese PR emphasized that the most important element of any plan would be to arrive at an interim government that was acceptable to all sides (and not just TNC-plus). The formation of such a government should mark the departure point for Qadhafi and could give him a political way out (along the lines of Yemen). But he was not sure that we could afford to wait for the convening of a National Conference to arrive at this point.

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