



Next Steps in Libya

Economic and Government Stabilization in
the Face of Political and Security Challenges

By William Danvers July 2016



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Introduction and summary

The alarming security, economic, and political trends in Libya are currently a critical issue for the international community. Europeans are particularly concerned about Libya as a point of departure for refugees and migrants.¹ Despite recent progress, the presence of the Islamic State, or IS, in Libya is also an urgent security issue for the country, as well as for the United States, Europe, and Libya's neighbors. At the same time, Libya is struggling to unify its government. Libya's downward economic spiral further complicates the possibility of a unified government and a more stable Libya.

Libya's problems are legion, but establishing a single government and creating a more secure environment are the first orders of business. The Government of National Accord, or GNA—a body that reflects an agreement made last December with the help of the United Nations²—has begun to establish itself in Tripoli and is trying to incorporate two opposing Libyan governments, which have been fighting each other since 2014. These are the Islamist-led Libya Dawn coalition—also known as the General National Congress, or GNC, which controls Tripoli and the eastern government in Tobruk—and the House of Representatives, or HoR, backed by retired Libyan Gen. Khalifa Hiftar and Operation Dignity.³ The GNA is working to establish a new government and taking immediate steps to improve conditions. While Libya has made progress in fighting IS over the past few months, the threat remains as long as IS leadership views Libya as a way to extend its caliphate—an Islamic state led by a caliph, a successor to the Prophet Muhammad. This is particularly true in light of recent setbacks for IS in Syria and Iraq.⁴

If the international community wants to help Libya rebuild, it needs to have a plan that outlines how it will assist Libya with its economy and the development of institutions that can provide the foundation for a revitalized nation. It is clear that having a functioning, unified government and making Libya significantly more secure is necessary to implement efforts to help Libya rebuild its economy and government. Indeed, a blueprint for such efforts could be an important incentive

for the Libyan people to coalesce around a government and a unified approach to security. As President Barack Obama famously said in a press interview earlier this year, his biggest “mistake” was not having a plan to help Libya after the fall of Prime Minister Moammar Gadhafi.⁵ But it is not too late to develop plans to put Libya on a path that offers promise rather than chaos.

Libya’s most immediate need is to make its hydrocarbon sector more productive. It is the lifeblood of the Libyan economy, and its collapse would affect all that happens in the country. At the same time, if Libya is to move beyond its present state of crisis, it must address economic problems, including the need to diversify. As part of its work to achieve economic viability, Libya has to create jobs, particularly for its youth but also as part of an effort to demobilize militia members. It also must support the viability of its own institutions. Basic services such as health care and education should be provided and made more responsive to the needs of the Libyan people.

This report examines the state of the Libyan economy, looking at the hydrocarbon, or oil and gas, industry and offering suggestions for how Libya can develop a functioning private sector. It also analyzes Libya’s health care and education systems as examples of key pillars for any sustained recovery. The report concludes by offering the following recommendations:

Economy

- The GNA should immediately focus on making the Libyan hydrocarbon sector more efficient so that it can work more closely with the private sector, including encouraging foreign direct investment.
- Libya must develop a more diverse, functioning private sector over the long term. As part of this, the GNA should employ creative approaches to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs, as well as microenterprises.
- The GNA must focus on job creation, particularly for Libyan youth and with an aim toward demobilizing militia members by offering them alternative employment opportunities.

Institution building

- Libya must work with the international community to create a governmental structure that is responsive to its citizens.
- The new Libyan government has to include representatives from regional and local governments as part of the rebuilding effort.

Health care and education

- The new Libyan government must revitalize the health care sector and make it functional.
- It also should focus on providing skills-based education programs for workers and students that connect their skill development to jobs.

Taking these steps would allow Libya to establish institutions that can not only help with its rebuilding effort but also engender Libyans' trust, which is necessary to the nation's survival.

Analysis of Libyan economic struggles

The Libyan economy is in dire straits. Its gross domestic product, or GDP, contracted 6 percent in 2015 and 23.5 percent in 2014, and real GDP has been shrinking since 2013.⁶ Inflation increased from 2.4 percent in 2014 to 8.6 percent in 2015 and is expected to reach 9.6 percent in 2016.⁷ The fiscal deficit for 2015 was expected to total 58.9 percent of GDP.⁸ Making matters even more complicated, Libya's two political factions each had their own budget in 2015.⁹

While there have been efforts to make reforms such as decreasing high food and fuel subsidies,¹⁰ such reductions are politically risky since many Libyans are dependent on government largesse. Subsidies and price controls have been used to keep consumer prices low, but the current security situation and the deterioration of government finances have made it difficult to keep inflation down.¹¹ Government-supported wages and salaries for both government and nongovernment jobs are the largest drain on the Libyan budget,¹² with projected government spending for wages and salaries comprising 56 percent of GDP in 2016.¹³ Only 4 percent of Libyans work for the private sector.¹⁴

Reducing economic dependency on oil and gas production

Oil and gas, or hydrocarbon, production is the key to Libyan economic stability. Libya was producing an estimated 1.4 million barrels of oil per day right after the collapse of Gadhafi's government. Production is now estimated to be less than 400,000 barrels per day.¹⁵ While the precipitous drop in oil prices has had a significant impact on the Libyan economy, it is not the sole factor in its dramatic decline. Corruption, poor management, and the fight over who controls hydrocarbon resources are all factors that have made the situation untenable.¹⁶ International organizations—such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD—and nongovernmental organizations, such as Transparency International, can help the new Libyan government deal with these problems. In addition, damage to the physical infrastructure has had a negative impact on production.¹⁷

The situation has become even more difficult with the split in governments. There is a clear understanding that control over oil is a way to ensure political and economic influence. Militias in particular have tried to exert control over the oil infrastructure in order to gain leverage.¹⁸ Control over oil fields in the south has shifted back and forth between the General National Congress and the House of Representatives. There has also been fighting in the Libyan oil crescent region in the north. The Islamic State has played a destructive role in Libya's oil industry as well, though it has not sold Libyan oil to fund its barbarous activities.¹⁹ IS has, however, attacked oil fields in the general region of its Libyan stronghold of Sirte. The goal has not been to seize the fields but to destroy them in order to hurt the supply of Libyan oil to Europe and precipitate the collapse of the Libyan economy.²⁰

Security is a fundamental problem for the Libyan hydrocarbon sector. International energy companies do not want to invest in a country or a region if it is not secure. The IS attacks, as well as the back and forth between warring Libyan government factions, have not only been counterproductive for production but also devastating for possible foreign direct investment, or FDI, which is key to the future of the hydrocarbon industry. In addition, there is a link between a revitalized hydrocarbon sector in Libya and the country's ability to depend on its own resources for its rebuilding effort.²¹

Furthermore, a major concern for Libya's long-term economic viability is its lack of diversification. Because oil is the only source of national income and the government is the nation's main employer, there is a crisis when both suffer, as is the case now. In addition, the lack of economic diversity is forcing people to look elsewhere for income—and perhaps move toward working with the illegal underground economy or militias. As stated above, Libya's private sector accounts for only about 4 percent of employment,²² and the country ranked 189 out of 189 in the World Bank's 2016 index on the ease of doing business.²³ In order to get the private sector moving, the Libyan government first has to deal with the security situation, but it must also in the near term restructure its legal and institutional framework to be more business friendly. Furthermore, it must work with regional and local governments in order to make them partners in rebuilding the economy.

Having stable and effective government is important to attracting FDI. Libya only scored 16.4 out of 100 points on the 2015 Mo Ibrahim Index, an annual statistical assessment of the quality of governance in African nations. This was well below the 49.0 rating for North African nations overall.²⁴ Libya's effort to reduce its

dependency on the hydrocarbon sector is a vicious cycle. There is little access to finance, and Libya spent approximately 70 percent of its 2015 budget on wages and subsidies, leaving very little money to spend on developing a financial infrastructure to support a private sector.²⁵ In fact, Libya is ranked as the worst country in the world for getting credit.²⁶

Supporting SMEs and job creation

If Libya is to begin to reconstruct its economy, making it less dependent on its hydrocarbon sector, then it has to develop strong small- and medium-sized enterprises. SMEs are the engines of job creation in an economy. According to the OECD, SMEs typically account for more than half of business sector activity and around two-thirds of employment.²⁷ In the case of Libya, access to loans for microenterprises would be useful as well. Creating jobs—Libyan youth unemployment hovers around 50 percent²⁸—is essential to foster economic growth and develop trust in the new Libyan government. Working with the United States, the European Union, and international organizations, the new Libyan government should create a system of micro- and small-business loans and loan guarantees, which are essential for getting the capital needed to help support SMEs and microenterprises.

Job creation also can be part of the solution for demobilizing militia members. For example, the government of Colombia, as part of its effort to reach a peace deal with the rebels it had been fighting for decades, established a reintegration program for rebels willing to lay down their arms.²⁹ While there are clearly differences between the two nations' militia situations—the battle against the FARC, Colombia's main opposition group, is a fight against a communist insurgency, while the fight in Libya involves a number of different militias with undefined goals—Libya can learn from the Colombian effort. A new Libyan government should draw on Colombia's experience, which could include training and jobs for demobilized militia members. This would require an aggressive SME program that focuses on job creation.

Consideration of regional economic integration through trade should be a longer-term goal of a new Libyan government. There are a number of existing regional associations of which Libya could take advantage, such as the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, or GAFTA, and the Common Market for Eastern and

Southern Africa, or COMESA.³⁰ Since the European Union remains the preferred destination for Libyan exports,³¹ there is clearly room to expand regional trade. This effort would take time as Libya rebuilds its government and economy, but regional economic integration offers potential benefits not only for Libya but for other Middle Eastern and North African nations as well. It would increase trade and investment opportunities, key to strengthening regional and individual nations' economic stability.

Building Libyan political institutions

Prime Minister Moammar Gadhafi left Libya dysfunctional, both politically and economically.³² He ruled through a deadly combination of incompetence and terror using his *Green Book* of sayings, an incoherent guide to governance.³³ Unfortunately, the resulting stress from which the entirety of Libya is now suffering has made recovery more complicated.

The fall of Gadhafi lifted the veil of governmental disarray. Gadhafi kept the civil service at bay and maintained control by creating too many jobs with too little purpose.³⁴ As a result, government ministries do not function in an efficient manner, despite the fact they are responsible for the delivery of nearly all public services to the Libyan people. While there was an effort to build a professional civil service and make these institutions work better, the political crisis in Libya effectively split the country and made it difficult to continue.³⁵ Further exacerbating matters, ministries do not have sufficient operating or capital expenses to do their jobs.³⁶ This erodes what little confidence there is in the Libyan government.

If Libya is to deal with its economic, political, and humanitarian crises, it must begin to reshape its governmental institutions. Three institutions that have continued to function, albeit with some problems, can serve as part of a foundation for a new Libyan government. These institutions—the Central Bank of Libya, or CBL; the National Oil Corporation, or NOC; and the Libyan Investment Authority, or LIA—have assets, estimated at more than \$130 billion, and technical expertise.³⁷ Currently, the NOC is caught in the crossfire of the fight between the GNC and HoR, with both laying claim to control over it, and the CBL is not immune to this political tug of war.³⁸ The LIA and Libyan African Investment Portfolio have had their assets frozen, but there is concern that they lost money beforehand due to restrictions and mismanagement: between \$5 billion and \$10 billion from a \$65 billion portfolio over the past several years.³⁹ In addition, LIA investments that were frozen in 2011 have matured but have not been reinvested. This means that the LIA has suffered a loss in earning power because these investments are now cash deposits in international financial institutions.⁴⁰ All of these issues should be sorted out by the United Nations-backed Government of National Accord.

Libya has had minimal experience with the democratic process. The development of a political culture and political institutions is a very necessary part of the next phase of a potential Libyan recovery. The United Nations has played an important role in establishing a political framework and opening a dialogue on bringing the Libyan people together,⁴¹ but no agreement will succeed unless it includes and empowers regional and local governments.

As the central government fell apart in 2014, local governments and militias started to play more of a role in governing parts of Libya. However, there was initially an acknowledgment of the need to include local governments in postrevolution Libya. In 2011, a Ministry of Local Government, or MoLG, was established,⁴² but it maintained a great deal of control over local governing councils, including financial control.⁴³

Making matters worse, the MoLG, similar to most of Libya, became split between the two governing bodies, the GNC and HoR, and did not have the wherewithal to do the job it was supposed to do.⁴⁴ This means that regional governing institutions have had to fill the void of a bifurcated central government at war with itself. Any future government must incorporate regional and local political actors if it is to succeed.

Regional and local municipalities need to function more effectively as well. If they are to be integrated successfully with the central government, they must provide services to and engender the support of their constituents. This includes, among other things, providing basic services, such as health care, education, and security; helping develop the local private sector; and involving minorities such as the Amazigh community, Tuaregs, and Tabu in the governing process.⁴⁵ This means dealing with corruption and making the bureaucracy more responsive to citizens' needs. The U.S. Agency for International Development, as well as the European Union and international organizations, can help regional governments become more efficient and effective through their governance programs.

Because of Libya's present political crisis and because of its history, the country does not currently have the institutional capacity to function properly. This means that it needs not only financial help, a political settlement, and better security but technical assistance as well. It does not have the cadre of civil servants that is essential to making sure that the government can function. This, in turn, affects trust in the government.

In the author's conversations with U.S. government officials over the past several months, it is clear they understand the need to help Libya with its institution building and its effort to work with regional and local governmental authorities. International institutions such as the World Bank and regional development institutions can also play a role through governance and related programs that are designed to make governments more responsive to citizens' needs. For example, the OECD helped the Palestinian Authority grow institutions that are more responsive to its constituents by helping to develop a handbook for civil servants and e-government for its citizens.⁴⁶

Health care and education: Keys to recovery

The Libyan government must be able to deliver basic services to its people. If, for example, the health care system is broken, then it is the responsibility of the government to fix it. Providing education for citizens is another service that the Libyan people have a right to expect from their government. It is also an essential component of job creation. The following section focuses on these two problems, which the Libyan government must address if it is to succeed.

Health care

According to the World Health Organization, or WHO, approximately 2.5 million people in Libya are in need of humanitarian assistance and 1.9 million are in need of health care.⁴⁷ Libyan society cannot function without at least minimal health care. Again, the security situation makes the situation worse. For example, approximately 80 percent of Libyan nursing staff, most of whom were foreign, left the country in 2014.⁴⁸ In addition, approximately 20 percent of all Libyan hospitals are closed, and another 60 percent of hospitals are inaccessible because they are in areas where fighting is occurring, effectively closing them down.⁴⁹

The World Health Organization has indicated that Libya needs \$50 million to respond to this crisis. It wants to focus its efforts in four key areas:⁵⁰

- Improving access to basic emergency services
- Reducing communicable diseases
- Strengthening health care infrastructure
- Providing mobile and other outreach health care services

The situation is exacerbated by the constant flow of refugees from Libya. Libya is a place of asylum for approximately 250,000 refugees and migrants in need of basic health care.⁵¹ This is not only a humanitarian crisis but a political crisis as well: The dramatic increase in refugees entering Europe via Libya has created political tension and a strain on resources.

The International Medical Corps, which operates throughout Libya, has identified a number of critical needs in Libyan health care facilities, including a lack of essential medicines, medical equipment, and other medical supplies.⁵² This is in addition to the shortage of health care professionals and structural damage to health care facilities due to the deteriorating security situation and lack of funding.⁵³ Stepping up security and infrastructure through funds from the World Bank, regional development banks, and individual governments are necessary first steps to address these issues.

Education

Libya's education situation, while not as acute as the health care crisis, also remains a major concern. Education is essential to job creation—matching skills with employment opportunities and developing financial literacy. Education should also be a part of reintegrating militia members into society.

Libyan school enrollment has been declining since 2011. The Libyan Education Ministry estimates that there has been a drop in school enrollment across the country of 21 percent for boys and 17 percent for girls.⁵⁴ And as many as 150,000 children no longer have access to education as a result of the security situation.⁵⁵ Many schools are closed, and those that are open find that students are unable to attend because of attacks.⁵⁶ In the World Economic Forum's "Global Competitiveness Report" for 2014–2015, Libya was last among the 144 countries surveyed in terms of the quality of education.⁵⁷ In Benghazi alone, UNICEF estimates that 136 out of 286 schools need to be rebuilt.⁵⁸

While a functioning higher education system is important to Libya's future development in order to train a competent workforce, providing basic education to its children is essential. If the Libyan government does not address this issue, it will lose the skills of a generation of children who are unable to access education because of the security situation. In addition, skills-based education—also known as vocational training—is key to future economic diversification and development.

Germany has a particularly good vocational training system that could serve as a model for a possible Libyan program. It has a dual vocational process in which a student receives vocational instruction, as well as on-the-job training, preparing students to enter the workforce successfully.⁵⁹ While Libya is certainly not Germany, using that system as a starting point makes sense. Developing such a system in Libya is a longer-term project but should be considered as the country revamps its educational infrastructure.

Recommendations

The key to any Libyan recovery will be determined by how the GNA handles the political and security crises. Nonetheless, there are steps that the GNA should take, working with the international community, to develop a plan to help a new government establish itself as quickly as possible—both in an economic sense and in the development of support from the Libyan people. This will require a sustained financial and technical commitment on the part of the international community. It will also require a solid commitment on the part of the Libyan people to help themselves. Without this, no recovery plan will work.

Economy

- **The GNA should immediately focus on making the Libyan hydrocarbon sector more efficient so that it can work more closely with the private sector, including foreign direct investment.** The first step is to establish one NOC, putting the GNA in charge. Having both the GNC and HoR involved is inefficient and confusing. The second issue that must be dealt with is ensuring that the oil infrastructure is protected, which means establishing an agreed-upon security force to watch over Libya's oil facilities. The international community, particularly the United Nations and other international organizations, can play an important role both in refereeing the fight between the various groups claiming to be the guardians of the oil industry and in training a national security force to actually do the job.

There will be no private investment if it is not made clear that there is one national oil company and there is no security. There will also be no private investment if the legal and bureaucratic framework governing investment is opaque and confusing. The GNA has to deal with this, as FDI is key to making sure that the Libyan oil industry operates as efficiently as possible.

- **Libya must develop a more diverse, functioning private sector over the long term.** Right now, Libya's economy is entirely dependent on its hydrocarbon assets, and this does not bode well for its ability to respond to changing markets. The Libyan government and the private sector must work together to plan a move toward diversification, whether limited or more in depth. The head of the LIA, Hassan Bouhadi, has indicated he wants to help with Libyan economic diversification and is willing to use LIA funds to help with this process.⁶⁰ International organizations and individual governments can play a role in this effort as well. For example, the new Libyan government should establish a board of Libyan government officials, Libyans with private sector experience, and international businesspeople who have had experience working in places similar to Libya to develop an action plan that contains metrics to move Libya toward more diverse economic development and sustainability.

As part of developing a more diverse, functioning private sector, creative approaches should be employed to assist small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as microenterprises. SMEs are the key to job creation. While Libya is essentially a one-product economy, this does not mean that it cannot build enterprises that connect with the oil industry both directly and indirectly, as well as provide a functioning service sector. As Libya begins to diversify its economy, it must rely on SMEs as the backbone of this effort.

Access to capital is also essential to developing a functioning private sector. Libya's record on having a system that provides access to credit for businesses is dismal.⁶¹ This is both a structural and a financial issue. International institutions, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and OECD, can help Libya develop a more efficient, functional private financial system, and the World Bank and regional development banks can put in place credit guarantee programs for Libyan businesses. It has been difficult for international organizations to work directly in Libya, but as the security situation improves, they can increase their presence. Bilateral assistance from the European Union and United States is also necessary. The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which can provide credit guarantees, could play an important role. Thought should be given to developing an international entity that would provide funding for microenterprises in Libya.

- **The GNA must focus on job creation, particularly for Libyan youth and with an aim toward demobilizing militia members by offering them alternative employment opportunities.** The job creation effort should focus on getting jobs for young people and using jobs as part of an effort to reintegrate militia mem-

bers into the economy. While not an exact comparison, Colombia's program to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate FARC guerrillas can offer some lessons for Libya to draw from as part of an effort to move young people away from militias. Creating jobs is an essential piece of this effort, as well as the effort to keep young people away from violent or criminal activities.

The United States and European Union should work with the Libyan government to set up a program that will create jobs with a focus on demobilizing militia members and to help provide funds for such an effort. Getting the Colombians and others involved and learning from their successes and mistakes would be very useful.

Institution building

- **Libya must work with the international community to create a governmental structure that is responsive to its citizens.** The Libyan NOC, CBL, and LIA can serve as examples of institutions that should be above the struggle of Libyan politics. Nonetheless, these institutions have also been whipsawed by Libya's political turmoil. Going forward, it is logical—indeed, essential—that the NOC, CBL, and LIA report to the GNA.

It is just as important to establish institutions that function and can provide services to the Libyan people. This includes the judiciary and basic infrastructure such as health care and education. The civil service needs to serve the Libyan people and a truly democratic parliament and government. International organizations and individual governments know how to develop these institutions. For example, the European Union and the OECD have a program—Support for Improvement in Governance and Management, or SIGMA—that helps governments develop civil service institutions and institutional structures.⁶² Much as they are trying to do with Ukraine,⁶³ the United States and European Union should come together with Libyan officials now to help assess what they need and provide the financial and technical resources necessary to build a new government that will engender trust and support.

- **The new Libyan government has to include representatives from regional and local governments as part of the rebuilding effort.** While the GNA has to play the key role in Libya's survival as a nation, a highly centralized system of government will not work because Libya's regions, particularly with the present weak-

ening of the central government, play an important role in the country's politics and economy.⁶⁴ Therefore, decentralization must be part of any rebuilding effort. Libya began to develop institutions, both federal and regional, that recognized the need to empower local officials, but political chaos and violence have largely short-circuited these efforts. Attention must be paid to minority rights within various regions and communities. Exclusion is a prescription for a failed government reconstruction effort.

As it garners support and establishes its mandate, the GNA should call for a council of regional and local government officials. This undertaking would be integral to setting up a new government structure that incorporates and empowers local officials. Creating a council of regional governments with real authority will not be easy and will require making tough choices about participants and the best path forward, but it is a much needed part of making sure the GNA succeeds.

Health care and education

- **The new Libyan government must revitalize the health care sector and make it functional.** International organizations—particularly the United Nations, including the WHO, UNICEF, and other U.N. bodies, as well as private nongovernmental organizations such as the International Medical Corps—will play a key role in efforts to triage a collapsing health care system. This means rebuilding collapsed infrastructure, providing at least a minimal amount of medicine and services to those in need, and bringing health care professionals back to Libya. Safety and security are key to re-establishing a health care sector. The international community should develop a program that will protect the health care infrastructure, including workers.
- **The GNA should also focus on providing skills-based education programs for workers and students that connect their skill development to jobs.** While the development of an SME sector is important, education is necessary to match jobs with skills. Education, similar to everything else in Libya, has suffered from the violence and political turmoil of the past several years. Working with institutions such as the OECD and UNICEF to develop best practices in education policy and practice would be a useful step forward in helping Libya. Vocational training should be integral to Libya's education plans. Helping young people develop practical skills can also help Libya diversify its economy.

Conclusion

The fight against the Islamic State is a significant threat not only to Libyan stability but also to its sovereignty. While this crisis must be dealt with, it should not be addressed at the expense of the fundamentals of a functioning Libyan state and economy.

Libya's most immediate need is to make its hydrocarbon sector more productive. However, if the country is to move beyond its present state of crisis, it must also work to build a private sector—diversifying the economy and providing jobs for youth and militia members. The government should also focus on providing basic services, including health care and education, to the Libyan people, as well as supporting the viability of its own institutions.

At the same time, it is essential to implement reforms at a pace that takes into consideration the GNA's ability to absorb assistance and adjust to change. Moving quickly is important, particularly when dealing with the hydrocarbon sector, but the private sector and involved international organizations should take care not to overwhelm the GNA.

Libyans must seize this moment as perhaps a last opportunity to take control of their destiny. The international community is currently focusing on Libya, and there is a new willingness to help. At the same time, the United States, European Union, and others must engage at the highest levels and sustain that engagement with plans to help Libya build its economy and governmental infrastructure. History has taught that if the world does not take advantage of such moments, things can—and often do—get worse. The international community cannot afford to let that happen in Libya.

About the author

William Danvers is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, where he works on a range of national security issues. Danvers has worked on national security issues for 35 years in the executive branch, Congress, various international organizations, and the private sector. Prior to joining the Center, Danvers was the staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for then-Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and worked at the National Security Council and U.S. State Department during the Clinton administration. He also worked at the CIA and U.S. departments of Defense and State during the Obama administration. In addition, he served as deputy secretary-general of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, where he was responsible for relations with nonmember nations, including regional programs in the Middle East, East Asia, and elsewhere.

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