



## Transcript

# Libya: Prospects and Challenges

### Alistair Burt MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### Sir Richard Dalton

Associate Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

### Lindsey Hilsum

International Editor, Channel 4 News

### Ashur Al-Shamis

Libyan Journalist

### Chair: Dr Claire Spencer

Head, Middle East and North Africa Programme, Chatham House

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### **Ashur Al-Shamis:**

Thank you very much for the invitation, and I would like to say that we are probably at the final stage of the Libya episode, the end game. And soon it will be checkmate, I hope. The shift in the Russian, Chinese, German, Mauritanian, the African Union, position is extremely important of course.

I think that we have exhausted all initiatives, road maps, exit strategy and so on. On the other hand, we are in a pre-transitional stage: a phase where 90 percent of the people are desperately engaged in either resistance or fighting or civil disobedience. People are preoccupied by one thing and one thing only, and that is the liberation of the whole of the country.

Nevertheless, I hate to sound alarmist, but I fear for Tripoli. I really fear for Tripoli in particular. It is the capital; it is where the centre of gravity is; it is the city without which victory cannot be claimed. No matter how many times we drop bombs or how many targets we hit. And it is Gaddafi's stronghold, where his power lies. Therefore, he has plenty of life in him yet. So people are talking about months now, or maybe weeks.

I think we have to help Tripoli to implode peacefully. I have said this at the very beginning of the conflict. As well as destroying Gaddafi's military might and machinery, a job well done by United States and NATO, we have to have a plan for imploding Tripoli. We all know that the regime is finished. The Jamahiriya – that's Gaddafi's model of state and statecraft – is in the last throws. Nationally and internationally, it is going. The international community is to be commended for spotting this very early on and stripping Gaddafi of all legitimacy and putting it on the National Transitional Council.

Now we do need to dislodge the remnants of the Jamahiriya. How do we remove this stinking, dying carcass?

People are now talking about the possibility of dividing the country. The United States and NATO they say can or will be from now on playing the waiting game. They are willing to think of a period of splits. It may be short, it may be long. It is becoming possible and acceptable to talk about the country in these terms. The extreme view is that the aim of the military campaign is to maintain the status quo for several months to come, to deplete the regime's resources.

Fair enough. But the cost for Libyans will be very high indeed. We knew that NATO has repeatedly said that it is increasing the pressure on Gaddafi to go. That Gaddafi has to be led out of Tripoli, if you know what I mean. So far, the people in the western part of the country have relied on their own resources.

They even created extra resources for themselves almost out of nothing. That is by defeating the other side and confiscating weapons and ammunition and so on.

In Misrata and the surrounding areas, we have seen how they have fought and still fight Gaddafi's militia and defeating them. They have defeated Gaddafi's militias and confiscated a great deal of weapons, ammunition and other military hardware. In Zintan, in Nalut, in Yefren, in Zawiyah and almost all of the Nafusa range.

Two days ago I saw on television young men in fatigues being trained in Zintan. Very impressive. They are to be the Tripoli brigade. They are on from Tripoli and are being prepared to move onto the capital and the northern cities and towns. This could be very encouraging. Their number, I understand, is over 800 people. They are very well-armed.

Defections also are very important. As you know, there have been so many defections, and defections after all are the action that brought this whole thing about. So defections are important but obviously it is not enough. Tripoli should be taken peacefully and without much bloodshed. I know that there is a local council in Tripoli at this moment, made up of 37 constituents all over the city from Tajura in the east to Zanzur in the west. It is possible for control to be transferred very easily and smoothly once Gaddafi goes.

We need to neutralise all civilians and many military personnel as well. There has to be a concerted and well co-ordinated campaign to appeal to individuals by name: ministers, people in the media, journalists, lawyers and so on, to break away from the regime. Of course, the military people as well.

We must call for reconciliation and tolerance and clemency, and an amnesty for everybody. We must avoid calls of revenge and retribution of all sorts. This is not the time for settling scores. We have to win minds and hearts.

The fact that some people have worked for the regime for many years must not stand between us and them. Most members of the NTC today were former regime members. Most of them were working closely with Saif Islam in his reform programme before the events started.

Now Saif has gone. Good riddance. But reform and more ought to be our paramount concern in the near future. We have a great reconciliation and restorative justice job waiting for us. Forty-two years have left many scars and bleeding wounds. The Abu Salim massacre, of course, where 1,270 prisoners were slaughtered in two days, is still in our minds. As long as Gaddafi is out, debate and dialogue must be open and transparent on all issues. We must

hear more voices like those of Mustafa Jabril and all members of the NTC calling for tolerance and reconciliation.

We also need to emphasise power-sharing between the existing revolutionaries and people who are still under Gaddafi's control. Now that we have dismantled Gaddafi's Jamahiriya, I hope, the old alien entity, we can move onto the next stage and that is state-building. This will have to start with the following.

National conference, to bring about the whole country together, to agree on the framework of democracy and power sharing. Prepare a constitution and how it should be drawn or formulated. Elections, the basis on which the country can be ruled. What institutions set up to prepare for a democracy, participatory and plural democracy.

We need something about power sharing and how we share power, how to merge the people who are now in the liberated areas and the people who are under Gaddafi. We need also another effort of national reconciliation amongst the Libyans, because the Libyans, there have been a lot of antagonism, a lot of animosity amongst these people, created over the last 42 years and we need to clear the air. We need to open a new page for everybody. We must not allow Libya to go back to a failed state it was 42 years ago. Thank you.

### **Alistair Burt MP:**

Thank you very much indeed. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to say a little bit about where we are in terms of policy at present. I've been asked to speak particularly about the international relationship and the strength of that. So there are so many other things to talk about as well. Forgive me if I omit things from the next five or ten minutes, but there's plenty of opportunity for questions and I'm happy for those to cover such a wide range.

Two things I would say right at the start, if I may. Firstly, what's remarkable is the degree of international unity and resolve in relation to what's happening in Libya. There's no sense that people's patience is being damaged. I'm off to Abu Dhabi tomorrow for the next meeting of the contact group. And I think we will see there again a reassertion of the international community, absolutely fixed in its determination to see through Resolution 1973.

And the second point I'd make, just in an opening, and I think Ashur made this clear also, there is an inevitable and inexorable progress. You can't put a timescale on it. But it is true that the regime is finished. It is not going to

recover militarily, economically, politically, from the squeeze in which it's in. And the desertions and the pressure exerted on the regime is leaving it literally nowhere to go.

When people talk of stalemate, we think they're missing the point of what is actually happening on the ground and the constant ratchet in what we would consider to be the right direction. And we think that has been the theme of the last two or three weeks with the relief of Misrata, the defection of generals. It's day by day, it's a steady progress in one particular direction.

Let me start more formally, however, by saying a little word about the visit that Andrew Mitchell and William Hague made to Benghazi last week to demonstrate their support for the NTC and to discuss their plans for a political roadmap for the future of Libya. As William tweeted on his return, the word and hope of many Libyans for freedom is inspiring. The progress that Libyan people in the NTC have already made is further proof that their aspirations can become a reality.

I just want to pick out two things from the private letter that William and Andrew wrote to the Prime Minister. They said, 'We were struck by the extent to which Benghazi is functioning normally, with police visible on the streets, shops and restaurants open, and food staples in good supply. It looks like a prosperous city.' And again, 'We were very impressed by the dramatic expansion of civil society groups since the revolution. They see themselves as one of the key building blocks of a free Libya. The groups we met highlighted the need for support now from the international community even before Gaddafi leaves the scene, a point reinforced by the NTC.'

We will continue to support this spirit that is very evident in Benghazi and the east of the country. During his visit, the International Development Secretary announced new UK support for the clearance of mines in Misrata, Benghazi and other affected areas to help ensure the safety of some 200,000 people. Of some 4,000 wounded persons that have been treated in Misrata alone so far, over 400 have reportedly required limb amputations caused by the mines laid by the regime. Clearing mines will help to ensure people's safety and help communities return to normal life.

And over recent weeks, I've met in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office a number of people who have experienced firsthand the situation of Tripoli. We've brought in people for what we term an eyewitness encounter so that I'm able to get a firsthand view from those people who are there, speak to people on the phone who are in difficult situations in Libya and just pick up from them a sense of what's going on.

They gave me a very powerful reminder of why the international community is doing what it's doing. I was told that Gaddafi has kidnapped hundreds, possibly thousands of young Libyans, that wounded demonstrators have been followed to hospital and executed, and that asking about someone who has disappeared leaves one in danger of being detained. And Tripoli is a hostage city, with snipers on the roof and a leader unable really to get support unless he's paid for it and lives in fear.

But alongside the Benghazi visit, and such a contrast with Tripoli, other recent events demonstrate that the international coalition against Gaddafi is strong and growing. UNSCR 1973 has as we know brought African and Arab support. The Arab League has played a critical role in helping us to build a positive future for Libya, not least as a core member of the contact group.

We're looking forward to another successful contact group in Abu Dhabi tomorrow, with a broadening coalition of countries both united and determined to help the Libyan people achieve a better future. Operation Unified Protector has been extended beyond its original 90 days, to allow us to continue our work protecting Libyan civilians. New EU sanctions were implemented yesterday on six ports in western Libya, helping to prevent Gaddafi from acquiring resources which are fuelling military activities, whilst allowing the continued movement of humanitarian goods to help protect the civilian population of Libya.

As I mentioned, further recent defections from the regime show that the pressure on Gaddafi is increasing from all sides, and that he's increasingly isolated domestically and internationally.

Whilst maintaining the military, diplomatic and economic pressure on Gaddafi today, we're also working to ensure that Libyan people are empowered to choose their own future. The United Kingdom has supported the NTC since its inception. The London conference on Libya brought together an unprecedented international coalition, and gave birth to the international contact group that continues to ensure ongoing unity, support and the co-ordination of assistance to the Libyan people.

It was also in London that the NTC delivered its first international press conference, and set out its vision for a free, prosperous and democratic Libya. The United Kingdom will continue to support the NTC in delivering this vision, along with its roadmap for a post-Gaddafi Libya that includes a commitment to hold democratic elections. This will be an important part of the discussions at tomorrow's contact group meeting.

We were one of the first countries to establish a diplomatic presence in Benghazi. Last month, we welcomed Mr Abdul Jalil to London and invited the NTC to open a formal office in the UK.

People are beginning to think much more now about what happens the day after post-conflict stabilisation. I think some lessons have been learned from the past. A team of development and security experts is currently in Libya to assess what the country will need in the period ahead of a political settlement, and with a view to supporting post-conflict planning by the UN.

The team, which includes representatives from international partners including Italy and Denmark, will help inform a co-ordinated international response to interim needs in areas such as economics, infrastructure, essential public services, security and justice systems, and politics.

I was very interested in what you said about restorative justice. The sense that a conflict in the region, in any region, could end without widespread vengeance and revenge, and that a concept such as restorative justice might get not only backing in theory but delivery in practice, it's a high aim. But it's absolutely right that such an aim should be there. No one doubts the difficulty of how you cope with a conflict situation in the circumstances which might arise. But at least to know that that thinking is going on is impressive, as far as we're concerned.

And I hope the sense that minds have already been turned to what happens after is also a reassurance. We know some of the failings of the past. But people are really thinking very carefully what can be done. And as I say, this will form a part of the work and the conversation that will go on tomorrow.

The UK is also providing mentoring and advice to the NTC on organising their internal structures, prioritising their resources and communicating more effectively. The UK is also providing communications equipment and supporting the emerging free media and the police.

Finally, our support for the people of Libya goes alongside our support for wider regional demands for freedom and democracy. We know that working with key regional partners will be a key to helping Libya find a long-term peaceful future. And our wider commitment to the region is underlined by our recent announcement of the Arab Partnership Initiative.

This includes a £110m fund to support political and economic development in the Middle East and North Africa over the next four years, working in partnership with regional governments and a wide range of international

partners. And this is in addition to the substantial financial package of the G8 and the work being done by international financial institutions.

So that's where we are at present – a sense that the international community remains very resolved to continue its role to see the fulfilment of a resolution to protect the civilian population in Libya, an aim that could be achieved tomorrow if the Gaddafi regime would stop killing its own people and accept the will of the international community, and above all of the Libyan people themselves. Thank you.

### **Lindsey Hilsum:**

Well, I've just been at a Foreign Office briefing. I can see at least one person who was also at that briefing, with your officials. And I learned a new verb at that briefing. And that verb was 'to ground truth'. They said, 'We've got people in Benghazi who are 'ground truthing.'" Well, journalists I think normally call that reporting. And that's what I do. But I think maybe there is an extra meaning to this, which is to try and see whether what they say in theory bears any relationship to reality. So that's what I think that we need to try and do.

I spent about six weeks in Benghazi. I got to Tubruq on 23 February – that was just under a week after the uprising – then spent that time in Benghazi, Ajdabiya and along that shifting frontline around Brega and Ra's Lanuf.

I have to say, it was tremendously exciting. It is an amazing thing to feel to be in a place where people are expressing themselves for the first time. And they still had the Katiba – the central barracks military area in Benghazi. The bulldozers which people had highjacked and knocked down the walls were still there halfway through the walls. And all the graffiti around.

And the graffiti were very instructive. One of the graffiti I liked most, I asked everybody, 'What does that say?' And they said, 'Ah, it says "Gaddafi. You are the weakest link."' I thought that was really interesting, because what that showed was that in these years when Colonel Gaddafi thinks that everybody was reading his third universal theory in the Green Book, they were actually watching exactly the same as what people watch here. They were watching reality TV and quiz shows and so on.

So you had this extraordinary situation where the politics had completely atrophied. Nothing had moved, whereas people's social lives and expectations and frame of reference had moved on hugely. Again, in the Katiba we were wandering around and we were looking for underground dungeons, and we found one. A man walked in and started to cry. He said,



'When I was 17, I was arrested at school. Six of us were arrested for saying something against Colonel Gaddafi. And I was brought here to this dungeon.'

Then another man, and this is again one of those cultural references, was talking to me about the whole thing. And I asked him, as journalists do, 'How do you feel?' And he looked at me and said, 'As Phil Collins says, "I've been waiting for this moment all my life."'

So their reality has changed, but what you have left is this terrible political void, because what Colonel Gaddafi did, as I think many people here know, was that he, in the Jamahiriya system, there was a principle of no representation. And he wrote things like 'Representation is flawed and a parliament is a misrepresentation of the people.' So there really has been no politics, and this is a huge problem.

I notice the Foreign Secretary said when he came back from Benghazi that the National Transitional Council are the legitimate representatives of the Libyan people. Well I don't know how he knows that. And I don't know how they can be. I'm not saying that they are bad people, but I'm saying I cannot see that they are the legitimate representatives. Not least because we don't know who many of them are, because many of the names have not yet been revealed because they're still living in hiding in the parts of the country which are controlled by Colonel Gaddafi.

And I think that the complete lack of institutions which you have is a huge problem in the future. We've seen this with the army. When I was there, I was constantly being introduced to colonels and generals who seemed to know absolutely nothing about what was going on militarily, who were very unimpressive characters who couldn't answer any questions at all. And when I was out on the front line with the fighters, half of them, they had no idea who any of these colonels and generals were.

There was also fighting, and you always get this, I don't mean physical fighting but conflict between internals and externals. And this came to a head with General Fattah Younis, who had defected from Gaddafi's regime, and some people would tell me that he's in charge of the military. And then you had another general, Khalifa Hefta, who had been in exile in Virginia in the US. Other people would say, 'No, he's the one who's in charge.'

So nobody knew who was in charge. And that kind of division between internal and external did not seem to be easily solved. One of the most interesting and impressive people on the council is the Finance Minister, Ali Tarhouni, who has come from Washington State University. I interviewed him just before I left and he was very clear that they didn't have a liquidity crisis.

He'd been and talked to the banks and he'd sorted it all out. And then a few days later, I read an official thing from the NTC in the Financial Times saying, 'We have a huge liquidity crisis.'

He said, 'We're going to be able to export oil very quickly.' Well they still haven't managed to export oil. So I'm not saying that these people have no legitimacy, or that they're bad or they're wrong. I'm saying that there are huge inherent problems there and those are going to be very big problems as the situation moves towards resolution.

I think that there's also an issue which needs addressing by the international community and by NATO, which is what you hope to achieve by air power and what the strategy and the goals really are. Because the aim is clearly regime change, to unseat Gaddafi, and yet the stated aim is to protect civilians. Now, in the long term, I don't think it's difficult to agree that the removal of the Gaddafi regime will protect civilians in the long term.

In the short term, of course, that's much more complex. And when it comes to Tripoli, what is NATO going to do if there's fighting in Tripoli? What is NATO going to do if civilians, some of whom do support Gaddafi or might be afraid of the rebels or might hate people from the east or whatever it is... If there is fighting, what are they going to do to protect civilians who are on the 'wrong' side?

That's something which, I think, hasn't been explained and which I think is a real danger, because when you're in Benghazi, it's easy to think that everybody thinks the same. It's easy to think: 'this is amazing, they're going to have a revolution and overthrow Gaddafi and everything is going to be fine.' But actually, it gets much more complex and when you get as far as Bin Jawad on the west, you start to get people who say different things to you.

That's not necessarily just because they've got secret police breathing down their necks. There are some people, some groups, who have benefitted from Gaddafi's regime and who are very afraid of what may happen next. It's not clear to me what the strategy is on the part of NATO, the British and the others to protect those people.

I think that there have been encouraging signs from the National Transitional Council. I think that the revenge killings, there have been revenge killings in Benghazi, but it has been kept to a minimum. There were attacks against Africans who were said to be mercenaries at the beginning, but I understand from human rights groups that the Africans who were locked up when I was there, who we went to see in prison, most of those have been released now because they were seen as not having been mercenaries but having been

just migrant labourers who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. And so I think because there are quite a lot of lawyers in the NTC, that's maybe one of the reasons that that situation has been resolved.

I think that there's also an issue about what some might call the indecent haste of the International Criminal Court, which does not leave Colonel Gaddafi very many options. I know many people say he would never have gone anywhere anyway, but it does reduce the possibility of him going anywhere and leaves this as a fight to the death. I've noticed that there is a new International Crisis Group report which just came out this week which suggests that actually there needs to be, the policy needs to be looked at again. And that there needs to be some kind of negotiation and for a truce and a deal. And that you cannot have getting rid of Gaddafi as a precondition, because that's not going to work.

Now I'm not saying that I agree with that, I'm just raising it because it hasn't been discussed very much. And at this point, when the campaign is only air power, they say there's not going to be boots on the ground, it is taking quite a long time and there is a grave danger to civilians in Tripoli. I think that that issue has to be addressed and looked at and examined. Because I think that we all, in the end, do want exactly what Ashur has said, which is a better life for people in Libya, and some kind of peaceful transition. Thank you.

### **Sir Richard Dalton:**

Thank you very much. I share Lindsey's concerns and I do think that the tone of optimism from both the Minister and Ashur does need to be questioned a bit further. In the work we've been doing at Chatham House on Libya, we've had answers I think to many of the questions that participants in those meetings have raised. For example, could a worse humanitarian problem than the one faced in February be averted... the one that was faced in February and which was averted by Resolution 1973, still occur? And the answer is clearly yes. We've done well so far, but there is huge disruption and huge costs to Libyans involved in restoring normality, let alone rebuilding.

Secondly, can the commitment of the coalition be sustained? Yes, but the work being done by the UK and France is disproportionate, it would appear. William Hague talked to fifty strike sorties a day yesterday in the House of Commons, but he didn't mention the proportion of those sorties that are being undertaken by the British and the French, and I have a hunch it's around 50 percent. Perhaps the Minister could comment on that.

Is the burden being shared sufficiently? This is, after all, quite a big issue casting forward to the kind of peacekeeping issues which Lindsey raised with respect to Tripoli.

Then can a stalemate be avoided? Yes, and I'm with the Minister entirely on this. We've not got a stalemate; we've got a slow accretion of strengths to the opposition.

Then will regional support hold up? Yes, I think it is. We'll hear more of the contact group tomorrow. To some degree, perhaps it suits sceptics in the Arab world, maybe some in the GCC, not too keen on seeing this kind of intervention in internal affairs, that we are so distracted by Libya and to a degree Syria and also deeply involved in the aftermath in Egypt and Tunisia. That's taking us away somewhat from looking at what's happening in the Gulf. William Hague's strongest word yesterday about Bahrain was concern.

So, next question, which I think we've looked at. Will full implementation of Resolution 1973 be actually permitted by the UN Security Council? Yes, but reviews are approaching. Second half of this month we'll see debates on just what has happened so far, reports by the Secretary-General and so on, so I just think while noting the change in the Russian and possibly the Chinese positions, we've just got to be a bit wary about that.

And finally, what kind of people are we supporting? There was concern as to whether the National Transitional Council and some of its supporters were a Trojan Horse for something else, for some other kind of extremism. I think that's been answered conclusively. It's not a Trojan Horse, and yes, we can trust the National Transitional Council to do their very best to see through the ideals which they've announced.

So those questions have been better dealt with; there are still many that are wide open. First, can the Transitional National Council be sustained? There's the sheer pressure of events, the stretching of the decision-makers, the uncertainty about who's in charge that Lindsey has referred to. But that's part of a wider political problem of bringing in the entire community, of making decision-making work better across the community of between one and two million people in eastern Libya.

There's the problem of the civilians carrying credibility with their soldiers. Is this something that is going to hold together as advance towards the west takes place? Then there's the cash needs – the temporary financial mechanism appears not to be working. I don't know how Ali Tarhouni is currently paying the bills. Is he going to be able to for the next few months? Is

he getting cash handouts from somebody that's not being announced? At the moment it seems to be smoke and mirrors.

And then finally, the economy. And here, having been in Benghazi myself three weeks ago for a few days, I felt that the extract from the letter which you quoted, Minister, was a bit over-optimistic. The economy of eastern Libya is at a total standstill other than for meeting subsistence needs and basic services, because the oil isn't flowing. So the stipends being paid to families, if, subject to the answer to my previous question, they can continue to be paid, are going to help sustain services, and sustain basic supply, but there wasn't a single pickup truck in the street carrying building materials. There was no building activity evident. In other words, it's a crisis economy at the moment. It's not, the underlying picture is not of a prosperous city. The superficial picture is of a calm city.

Second big question. Will the National Transitional Council's strategy work? In other words, what Ashur was talking about, steady advance leading to risings in Tripoli. Here, of course, we don't know what's going on in Tripoli. I have my own view, which is to sympathise with something I heard in Benghazi from a senior member of the National Transitional Council, which is that there is of course the core of support for Gaddafi, but then there's also a large number who have not made up their minds. He put it, this person, at 25 to 30 percent three weeks ago. Maybe that's shrinking.

But this is a formidable issue. It's not just a matter of fear and bribery. It is a big political issue that has to be resolved somehow, and the indications that Ashur gave are very encouraging.

But is this kind of talk we hear from Ashur actually the talk of the National Transitional Council? Here, again, maybe for very good reasons, people like us looking in from the outside are at a bit of a disadvantage because we haven't seen the full published version of the roadmap of the National Transitional Council. Perhaps someone can correct me if I'm wrong, and point me to where it's to be found if I am wrong.

But what I've seen is the vision for the future, which everybody draws on, which was admirable, which was enunciated in London, confirmed in the other meetings of the contact group, and is the basis of the many interviews that are given. But the more detailed work, maybe it's not complete yet, or maybe it's something that is best not talked about publicly given the need for eventual negotiation.

So an international stabilisation response team in Benghazi is an excellent thing, but the key issue is what the National Transitional Council is saying and

is going to say to its fellow Libyans beyond the generalisation that there will be no wholesale removals of personnel and the technocrats from the former regime would be in the Transitional Council.

There's a slight oddity here, a mismatch between what we've heard and what appears to be happening, in that the UN was given certain tasks at previous rounds of the contact group, but does seem to be quite backward in coming forward. Maybe they are reluctant to get out ahead of the Libyans themselves. Maybe one shadow of the International Criminal Court is casting itself forward, namely that the UN can't in a transition situation deal with somebody who is actually indicted by the International Criminal Court.

So yes, we need to talk more about the open questions. We need greater clarity on the roadmap. We need to know more about the actual possibility of a negotiated surrender, as suggested by the International Crisis Group. We need to know an awful lot more about the maintenance of order thereafter.

Maybe the time is now that a further mandate from the Security Council should be prepared for. If you were to ask for it now, of course you wouldn't get it. But the point about being ready for a total breakdown of order in Tripoli is surely one worth thinking about before it's actually upon us. Thank you very much.

#### **Alistair Burt MP:**

Well, I think we've heard an optimistic view from myself about where we believe this is going and a very gloomy view from Richard about where he thinks things might go if everything goes wrong. The truth, as always, is likely to end up somewhere in between. I think it's right to start with an optimistic determination, but for that to be based on reality and I think it is. Richard said we don't quite know what's going on in Tripoli. Well, we do, actually. We do have contact with people in Tripoli. We do know what's going on. The economics of the east is smoke and mirrors. Well, you don't pay people in smoke and mirrors. There's obviously money coming through somewhere. And we do speak to people with their eyewitness reports about what's there.

Much of what he says, though, in essence I agree with and understand. But the trouble is, there's some things we won't know until things happen. The truth is, we won't know how the TNC is going to handle the initial administration. The best we can go on at this stage is people's declared vision and what they intend. We have nothing else to go on. But at least it's there. And it's there in a way which people can identify.

And in answer to Lindsey's questions about are they legitimate representatives, well it seems to us they do have authority. There's no doubt, wherever you look in the eastern region, although it is to a degree understandable that the process of decapitation has left its mark and therefore there isn't and has never been an opportunity of gathering people together who are obvious opposition figures to mount an operation like this, pulling it together takes time.

But our evidence has been that over time, the TNC and those around them, they have gathered people together. They're in a much better position than they were in a couple months ago. And that's undeniable.

But where we all end up, generally none of us quite know. The specific action taken, and again just to finish off on one of Lindsey's points to respond to that. The specific action taken was in response to the threats of Benghazi, and the resolutions about the protection of civilians. That's quite right. And the work going on to do that. And she's also absolutely right to say that that resolution will hold whether there is a change in government or not. Of course it applies to those who will assume responsibility after that. That's absolutely clear. And that has been made very clear to the TNC. We've no evidence to suggest at the moment that they would not want to govern in that way. What is the point of achieving what they've done? But it's very clear on that.

Although that is the purpose of the resolution, politicians have been clear about the stated aim that Gaddafi should go. And we make no bones about it. So the UN resolution is not about regime change, it isn't. But it is the stated view of all the members of the contact group, which others are being added, most recently the Russians, to say that there isn't a future for Libya with Gaddafi there. So I can state plainly, is it the aim of the British Government that Gaddafi should go? Yes it is.

### **Lindsey Hilsum:**

Is it rude if I ask a question? I think one concern is the issue about protection of civilians in Tripoli. Because we understand that the policy, the international policy succeeded in protecting the civilians in Benghazi. No question. But I think the concern is protecting the civilians in Tripoli, some of whom may resist a takeover by the NTC. What is the policy of NATO and the British Government for that eventuality? Or for that possibility. What's your contingency for that?

### **Alistair Burt MP:**

I understand the point, but it isn't possible at this stage to go into the hypothetical of that. As I say, the TNC and those responsible in the opposition at the moment know entirely where we are all coming from in relation to this. We see absolutely no evidence in anything they're doing that they would seek any reprisals or vengeance because they know what it would mean.

How conflict is dealt with is quite different, and that there might be resistance is always possible, but equally clearly, we hope that isn't the case. The inexorable progress that we have all spoken of, the most beneficial outcome of that is that the regime realises, as I indicate, as I think we all have a sense, there's nowhere for it to go. There's no external force that is suddenly going to re-equip the army, is going to find more money, is going to find more diplomatic support.

So at some stage, to continue with your cultural references from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, 'resistance is useless.' And there comes a point where the regime knows and supporters of the regime, again, from all we know, remember in the earliest days of the fighting, when opposition forces would capture soldiers from the regime, they were horrified and stunned to find that they were fighting Libyans. They had been told that they were fighting Al Qaeda, that they were fighting foreigners, this was a Western intervention.

So there are people in Tripoli who we can assume just do not know the reality and the truth of the situation. And when that becomes clear, there's always a tipping point in terms of a city moving or realising that change is coming, what impact that will be.

Clearly, we would all hope at the very best, there isn't the hand to hand, door to door fighting, because it is pointless to do that. No one quite knows how it will end, but the aim, the intensification, it's designed to convince the regime it is pointless going on. The best that can happen for everybody in Tripoli, in the country at large, is for the regime to end its resistance to the international community and the will of the Libyan people as they are seeing it expressed, that Gaddafi should go, and then from that point, to pick up on the preparation, the work that's being done for the new Libya by so many Libyans.

### **Question 1:**

I have two questions. The first one is the Libyan leader Gaddafi declared that the so-called 'gate to peace is open'. And also, he has welcomed mediation



like by South African President Jacob Zuma, even though empty rhetoric and pompous gestures. Would you not think that could potentially split off some coalition members? Or tie up its internal deliberation?

My second question is: why is Gaddafi not flinching against the world's most sophisticated military forces? And perhaps I think because the Gaddafi regime is convinced that there's always political constraints. And often binding the coalition members. Would you not think that would play in the hands of Gaddafi in the long term?

### **Question 2:**

Thank you very much. Question really for Mr Al-Shamis and Lindsey Hilsum on the divisions that are perhaps opening up amongst the opposition. Firstly, what your assessment is of this 17 February coalition that has apparently set itself up as the true guardian of the revolution? Supposedly liberal lawyers, judges, that sort of thing. But reports I've been hearing of confiscating property and divvying it out to their supporters in Benghazi.

And secondly, this issue about the rift that appears to have opened up about the security situation for Benghazi. With some saying that we should obviously employ members of the former regime security forces, that it's very important as part of the whole reconciliation process and what's more, they're necessary. And others saying, no, absolutely not, we don't want anything to do with these people. Is that a worrying microcosm of things to come?

### **Question 3:**

I was in Libya a couple weeks ago and I left with a very positive impression, but I was in New York last week and left with a very negative one, particularly as I was given the impression that the sanctions regime wasn't particularly effective. And I was told that there was concern about putting too many sanctions on Colonel Gaddafi's rump state because of the consequences that that would have for the rest of Africa, given the relationship between the Gaddafi state and some of the African countries, particularly the sort of Ghanaian health system was brought up. I don't know.

But my question really is, to what degree, Minister, do you think that enough is being done on sanctions? Could more be done in the coming weeks to ramp up the pressure?

#### **Question 4:**

Thank you. Everybody seems to agree that Gaddafi has got to go, but the question surely is where? Given that the ICC has indicted him, what if any are the prospects for him to go into exile somewhere? And if so, where could that be? Thank you.

#### **Alistair Burt MP:**

Let me take some of these, so that we're not trying to answer every question. 'The gate to peace is open'. Well, the gate to peace has been open for a long time, and the offers of ceasefires have been there and they just don't happen in reality. So I think the sense is that until any action follows the words, there's no sense that Gaddafi is in a position to deliver on anything that he says about what he might do. And I think we have more or less shut down on the idea. Unless, as I say, real action is followed. If the regime's troops were to stop fighting and withdraw, that might change the situation. But so far there's no evidence of that.

Is Gaddafi encouraged by the fact that we stick to rules and he doesn't? And that this might help in the long term. Well, it would be a false aspiration on his part, because the rules are sufficient to ensure that we can fulfil the resolution and the international resolution, the commitment to do the job, should give him no sense that time is on his side. Time isn't. Time is on the side of the opposition as it grows in strength and authority and determination to do its job.

Libya and New York, very interesting. You were optimistic when you were in Libya, and not optimistic when you're in New York. I think that tells us something. On sanctions, I think you make a very good point. And probably something all of us don't consider perhaps as often as we should. The extraordinary circumstances of all these events in the area, we are used to saying and I'm sure almost all of us in this room would know and understand, each of these countries is different. There are certain common themes that we've seen in recent months, but they're all different and therefore the responses to protest and change have been very different.

But in other senses, they are interconnected. And the economic impact of what has been happening has not yet been fully assessed in terms of impact not only on individual countries but on their neighbours. North Africa, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, economic ramifications for some time in relation to these countries. We know that. And then you drop below geographically, you drop

lower than Libya, you come into sub-Saharan and the neighbours there. Impact of economic conditions there. Yes, there will be an impact.

The purpose of sanctions, of course, is to target the regime and again enforce the will of the international community as quickly as possible. Is there more than could be done? Well as I said, yesterday certain ports were designated in order to stop the flow of oil and also to make sure humanitarian supplies go on. The search will always be there to see if there's any further way in which the international community can express its voice to put the squeeze on the regime, but not as best as possible at the expense of the Libyan people.

The argument is not with the Libyan people, it is with the regime. There are certain things that can't be done, and it's true that there are certain constraints because we only want to target the regime. But I think that search will go on to try and make sure we get the right balance.

Where will Colonel Gaddafi go? I think this is not part of anybody's official script in HMG, because there are things that we... I'm not searching for my private secretary who is wincing, he is, wincing in a corner. I think the truth is, the facts of life are, that people are talking to Colonel Gaddafi about that possibility, of course they are. I'm sure part of His Excellency President Zuma's remit was to discuss that possibility. It is not a matter for the United Kingdom Government where Colonel Gaddafi might go. I think William's phrase some time ago was we would not stand in the way of exit. But equally it's not up to us to start picking countries or suggest there are places where it takes a little while for the post to get through. There are big justice issues there and everything else.

But the practicalities are such, I'm sure we would all agree, that it is when Gaddafi leaves or when Gaddafi is no longer there one way or another, that things change. So we will wait and see. I'm not aware that there is absolutely nowhere for him to go. I understand Lindsey's point on the ICC very clearly and it's been raised by others. I don't think in reality it's an absolute bar to people moving. But we'll wait and see.

### **Ashur Al-Shamis:**

I just want to say general ideas first. I agree, why should we be the ones who think where Gaddafi should go? Why do we have to prepare everything for him? He doesn't want to listen. It's not that he doesn't want to go, he doesn't listen. He didn't listen to Zuma. He doesn't listen to people inside the country who are suggesting all sorts of formulas for him. He doesn't want to listen, because he thinks that the longer he stays, the longer he will force the

situation on NATO, on the United States, on the international community, to accept him and he will stay there anyway. That's the way he's thinking about it. The more he stays in the place, the more his legitimacy becomes stronger.

But I think this is really a waste of time. It is him who has to think; it is him who has to decide where to go. I understand there are nine countries that can take him, who they are, I don't know, but there are people who are suggesting this for him.

As far as the National Council is concerned, please remember it's called a Transitional National Council. Underlined transitional. Very, very important. I think the Transitional Council has been doing more than what it should be doing. I have full admiration for the Council and full support of the Council. But I think it has been derailed by public demand. Public demand in Benghazi is trying to apply democracy with all its aspects in a very short period of time. Yesterday there was somebody on the internet saying, "We want to know where the money went and we want to know where has every penny, where has it gone and how has it..."

You know, this is impossible. This is too much for the Council. It's too hasty from the people to expect the Transitional Council to be the government. It's not a government. It is not a council, it's a transitional council. So it has specific objectives.

I think its priority should be to make sure the situation in Benghazi goes smoothly, and so on. And then concentrate on the areas which are not liberated, mainly Tripoli. I think this is very, very important. The Council has to have a plan for dealing with Tripoli, what to do with Tripoli, how to talk to them, how to establish contact with people in Tripoli and how to take it further.

Now this, the 17 February and so on, you know there are loads of these organisations. There are innumerable political parties and civil society organisations and so on, but really they formulate and decide their own agenda and their own area to work with, but shouldn't really affect the Council. The Council has these very specific objectives and it must work for them. It should not preoccupy itself with putting up a constitution for us or allowing political parties or doing this... This is none of its job, really. The job is to concentrate on liberating the country.

### **Dr Claire Spencer:**

What about the accusations of confiscation of land? I believe there was something specific you said there.

**Ashur Al-Shamis:**

There are lots of things going on which are wrong.

**Sir Richard Dalton:**

Well, just to say that the opposition, the successful opposition in the east is in effect a coalition between communities across the east, towns and cities. It's also spearheaded by the 17 February movement, which is the name given to the largely young, cross-class revolutionaries who are the spearhead of the armed forces. The National Transitional Council has to take account of their views the same way as it has to take account of the views that might emerge from Al Bayda and Darnah from the council that has emerged to fill the vacuum in Al Bayda and Darnah. So there is a coalition here.

As to misbehaviour, there has been some vigilante action against former members of the Gaddafi revolutionary committees, and I think that together with sheer looting has been dealt with in two ways. First, social cohesion really counts in Benghazi. People get together block by block, community by community, to defend their property. And secondly, the NTC is trying to re-establish the judicial system. Whether they've yet dealt with these complaints or not, I don't know.

**Question 5:**

Thank you. Unfortunately the question is for the Minister, on a point raised by... It was on more details for the relative efforts undertaken in the aerial bombing campaign.

**Question 6:**

Question for Mr Ashur Al-Shamis. You talk about reconciliation plan with Libyans. There is any reconciliation plan now put in place? And who should take responsibility about it? Is it the NTC? The civil society? Or the social system represented in the tribe leaders?

The second thing, I just need to make sure to clear something to Lindsey about the protecting civilians in Tripoli. There is no fear about civilians in Tripoli from the NTC. NTC, I think, created to liberate Libyan people and bring the freedom to them. The thing is, we fear about the civilians from the Gaddafi forces, and the Gaddafi militias. This is the more, I think the point should be clear. Thank you.

### **Question 7:**

We had at the beginning from Ashur Al-Shamis talking about the Nafusa Mountain and how that has now fallen into rebel hands. And what you saw in Zintan, and we also know that the town of Yafran on the north of the mountains is in rebel hands. The pipeline from the oilfields in the south west of Murzuq Basin runs up through both those towns. And this is the pipeline that takes oil to the refinery which is now without oil coming in ships, it's the only source that Colonel Gaddafi has to get fuel.

I've been asking myself for quite awhile why those rebels have not cut this pipeline. And I can only assume it is because of the disaster that that would eventually bring to the people of Tripoli when all fuel eventually was cut off.

The other thing that Ashur mentioned in his talk was the need for a peaceful implosion in Tripoli. But doesn't this point, the reason why this is so difficult, in that cutting off Colonel Gaddafi's resources will eventually mean cutting off resources to this entire city and all the consequences which that will have.

### **Question 5:**

Yes, it was a question on a point that had been raised by Richard Dalton. If you could give us some details on the breakdown of the efforts undertaken by different allies in the bombing campaigns, and in addition, to what extent in your view do you feel that the operation has been hampered by the fact that several European countries have shied away from undertaking these strikes themselves, and others are only providing political support.

### **Question 8:**

It's a question for the Minister. It's a follow-up really to what Lindsey was asking. Are you basically saying that there is no contingency plan for the very real chance that civilians might end up fighting against the rebels because they don't want... people in Sirt, people in Tripoli don't want this National Transitional Council to be taking over.

And also, could you give a sense, some sort of timeline... We've had very hard bombing of Bab al-Azizia. Can you give a sense of the damage to that compound? When will, physically, Gaddafi run out of places to hide?

### **Alistair Burt MP:**

I can't help you with the breakdown, forgive me, because I just don't have those figures with me. It's a perfectly straightforward question, but I don't

have the military details of strikes to hand. I'm sure it's available somewhere, I just don't have it. Does it matter? No, it doesn't. Let's be quite clear about this. Different countries are contributing in a variety of ways to a collective extraordinary effort. And we're all doing what we can with the resources most effectively targeted to bring about the result that we want. I've not heard it expressed around the NSC table or anything else that there is concern and a sense, oh, how many are we doing, how many are they doing? The point is, are we collectively doing the job. It would bring great comfort to those who would not like to see us successful to get into all this, and for each to be looking over their shoulder.

Let's remember how this started, with the most remarkable partnership between France and the United Kingdom in the first place, driving things forward as the basis of what is becoming an even stronger defence relationship between our two countries, and collective work being done to bring others on board and each contributing. So does it matter to me? No, it doesn't. What matters to me is that collectively we're successful and we do the job and that people are making contributions in different ways, seems to me to be entirely appropriate.

In terms of the... no, I didn't say there was no contingency planning. As I tried to make clear, the extraordinary thing is so much contingency planning is going on about what might happen post-conflict. But I think there is an issue about how detailed that can be at this particular stage. But what I also indicated was the work that people are doing... which in a way, they don't need to do, because of everything we've heard about where opposition forces are coming from, in terms of their determination to make sure that things are handled in Tripoli in a manner which is going to be consistent with what they have said about their vision of the future, and how they would intend to see a new Libya arise.

So I think that's as far as the planning needs to be at this stage, as far as dealing with some of those hypotheticals are concerned. I think to ask the international community for a detailed battle plan, step by step, I don't think that's the point. In any case, I'm not sure how much that would necessarily be revealed. But there is a great deal of work being done about how things would be handled, is absolutely clear.

None of us know the circumstances in which Tripoli might change or might fall. We don't know. But up to now, it's been very clear. Civilians have been threatened by the Gaddafi regime, waging war on its own people. And that is what has been determinedly resisted by the international community

supporting elements of the Libyan opposition who are fighting for their very lives. I'm not sure what evidence there is in other places that what you are saying has happened or been done and not been dealt with perfectly straightforwardly by opposition forces.

I think there are many things to think about in terms of what will happen, but there is a huge amount of work going on to plan for that and to make sure that's right. That's just one particular aspect of it. So it isn't right to say work isn't being done in relation to that.

In terms of how much damage has actually been done to the compound and the like, yes you do begin to wonder how much can be taken. So long as there are command and control centres hidden in the various places where they are and they can be identified, they will be struck. But there is an inevitable atrophy of the regime and its ability to be able to conduct operations from these centres. And this will go on until the regime realises it cannot continue its effective work and they will continue to be identified and the ability of the Apache helicopters, for example, to be very direct and very targeted in what they're doing enhances the capability and intensifies the work which is all designed to support and fulfil Resolution 1973.

Is he still hiding in various places? Yes, our intelligence tells us that, because he knows that we won't be bombing or attacking hospitals, in contrast to some.

### **Ashur Al-Shamis:**

First of all, I think this idea of Tripoli looking at the TNC as something alien or something that's coming to occupy, this is ridiculous. These ideas never, ever are thought of. As far as I know, the people in Tripoli are in contact with the Council and they are in full agreement with the Council, movements and policies. The thing is, when Gaddafi goes, then they will have to sort out a way by which you transfer power from one organisation to another and you will have a national sort of power that covers the whole of Libya and so on. So there will be a period of reorganisation there. I don't know what shape it will take, how long it will take, I don't know.

As far as the roadmap of the Council, I'm not aware of a roadmap of the Council as far as Tripoli is concerned. But probably they have but have not revealed. Perhaps there are some other people here who know it. I don't know it.



Now, if you come to the reconciliation aspect, I think the reconciliation would need a commission. It will need people to think about it. It will need people appointed to sit down and work out a programme. What I'm trying to say is that we should think of it right now, from now. The Council as well as the people. We must think about it now and have it ready as soon as we can.

About the oil, of course the Libyans have never thought of destroying the oil installations or pipes, something like that, because that would be counter-productive. It's true that the pipeline is the only source of oil to the refinery in Zawiyah, but the refinery in Zawiyah is not functioning. It is not functioning. There is the international sanctions as well helping that, because there is nobody willing to buy oil or sell oil to the regime except of course smugglers and boot-leggers. Otherwise, it is safe. If you leave it alone, it is safe. This is why they haven't touched it. There is Mr [inaudible], who is an oil expert and probably will be able to say more about that.

#### **Question 9:**

Minister Burt, we thank you very much for your optimism and we hope the developments will conclude with minimal damage and swiftly. My question to you is I wonder if you can give us an insight as to the reason or reasons as to why the British Government has not recognised the Council yet. And if the frozen assets has anything to do with it.

#### **Question 10:**

Most of you seem to think that Gaddafi's fall is inevitable. Let's assume that it's not going to happen in the next few weeks. How long do you think air strikes can continue for? And if air strikes alone don't work, what's next? What's your Plan B, so to speak?

#### **Question 11:**

Our team in Benghazi has spoken to children who've been displaced from areas affected by conflicts and they've either seen or experienced violence or have been in contact with weapons and mines and so on. Obviously that situation is going to be worse further west, the children that have not been able to flee. So I'd particularly like to hear the Minister's view on the emergency relief co-ordinator's suggestion of a humanitarian pause, to allow aid agencies in and to allow those who want to to flee the violence.

**Question 12:**

Alistair Burt, you mentioned that sanctions were deliberately targeted against regime insiders. I think an interesting exception is a state-owned shipping company, owned by Hannibal Gaddafi. Why hasn't this been sanctioned yet?

And secondly, and this is a general one for the panel, Tripoli is a city of 1.6 million people. We've heard Gaddafi's fighting forces have been reduced to 20 percent or thereabouts. How is he maintaining control of Tripoli if he doesn't have a constituency there? And who within his regime or within his constituency would be deemed a suitable interlocutor for the TNC? We've heard no indications as to who might be willing to engage with.

**Question 13:**

Just a question to the Minister, actually. The Libyan people, they do greatly appreciate NATO's involvement to protect them. Gaddafi's sources, they have to make something out of that by claiming, putting many claims out as to what NATO has secured for what they are doing now, especially the key countries. Is it possible to clarify exactly if there was anything, any deal that took place as to what the key NATO countries will get actually in return for what they are doing now?

**Question 14:**

I wonder whether each of the panellists would give a simple yes or no answer to the question: was the ICC indictment of Gaddafi at this stage helpful?

**Sir Richard Dalton:**

Yes.

**Alistair Burt MP:**

Yes.

**Ashur Al-Shamis:**

Yes.

**Lindsey Hilsum:**

I'm an impartial journalist, so I'm not going to say if it was helpful or not, those aren't the terms I deal with. But I can see that there are... As this campaign

continues, longer than the people who started it wanted, a number of issues come up as more and more of a problem. That comes up as a problem. What he can do, where he can go, that I think is an issue. And I think that the Transitional National Council has a lot of challenges which have been raised by the audience, which are completely understandable. But as this campaign becomes etiolated, there are likely to be exacerbated divisions between internals and externals.

So I think that the idea that there may have to be a Plan B if Gaddafi doesn't fall within the next few weeks, we might come back here in three months time and be having a very different discussion.

### **Ashur Al-Shamis:**

What I think that we and the Council do is to think of Libya after Gaddafi and prepare for it. That's our job. It's not our job to run the country now. We're not the government. We are not to be answerable for everything to do with the government. We have to specify our aims and concentrate on what do we do to get rid of Gaddafi and what do we do after Gaddafi. That's the most important thing for the Council and for us as people as well.

I think, like I said, the people seem to be driving the Council into real trouble by asking them to be responsible for everything. The Council can't do that and it will be unfair to try and put the Council also in the accused position and that we start to tear it apart. It's not good.

### **Sir Richard Dalton:**

I think that the National Transitional Council and the 17 February movement's strategy will work. It is to advance militarily to the point where city by city, Libyans in areas still controlled by Gaddafi have the confidence to liberate themselves. But how long that will take, one just doesn't know.

As far Gaddafi's departure is concerned, I think the NTC does need to be more open, as I said in my opening remarks, about how a negotiated surrender leading to his departure can actually be achieved. And that means being more forthcoming, including, although we are marginal, to their well-wishers outside Libya, more forthcoming on how they would actually run Libya and how they would actually run a transition. So surfacing their roadmap and messaging it more consistently into western Libya seems to me utterly crucial.

**Alistair Burt MP:**

In I think broadly the order they came in. Regional council. Well, the British Government has recognised them as a legitimate representative of the Libyan people and they have an office. They're not the government, and that still remains the regime. But I think the recognition of their authority is very clear in what the United Kingdom Government has done and said. And we're not being pressed by the TNC to do anything further. I think the relationship is pretty clear. Does it have anything to do with the frozen assets? No.

Fall inevitable? Well, yes, we clearly think it is. How long will it take? We don't know. Will the pressure on the international community's resolve last until the resolution is fulfilled? Yes, it will. And it is the piece of string argument, but at present it's quite clear that the international community's resolve is very strong and everything we hear, everything we've heard today from Libyan people makes it very clear that that should continue and that's certainly the determination.

As far as protecting children is concerned, the best thing that can be done to protect children is fulfilment of 1973 as quickly as possible. The United Kingdom has already contributed some £13.5 million by way of humanitarian assistance and the people are very well aware, colleagues are very well aware of the importance of protecting children from harm and dealing with the aftermath of the trauma which they've been through. But I think the sense is that the quicker the resolution is prosecuted and fulfilled, that is the best answer for the future of the children of Libya.

You asked the specific question on sanctions and the state-owned shipping company. It may have something to do with the type of asset which can be frozen and the use of the ships may be, in terms of bringing different sorts of supplies into Libya. But I'm not going into any specifics because I don't know straightforwardly the answer to the question, but I suspect it will be technical to do with precisely what it's doing and the sanctions don't necessarily apply to cover the supplies that these ships might be bringing in.

If there's no constituency for Gaddafi, why is Tripoli still in his hands? Well, you don't need all that many people on roofs with guns to make sure your population is kept in place.

And again, as we heard before, there's no doubt that the people in Tripoli who do support Gaddafi will fall into a mixture of groups. There will be those who support him absolutely wholeheartedly because that is what they believe. There will be those who support because they have been led to believe something that patently is not true. And there will be those who were waving

their flags and waiting desperately for somebody else to come around the corner. As Ashur was saying, there was plenty of evidence from contacts with people in Tripoli to know that that is a fair number. That they are not, understandably, going to move until they feel they are safe. And we would all understand that. None of that suggests that there is an extensive constituency for Gaddafi.

Has there been any deal done with NATO? No. This isn't a bargain to give something back to the countries that are involved. This is the international community responding to a tragedy of events set upon the Libyan people and seeking to act and do the right thing.

Was the ICC indictment a good thing? Yes, I think I'd agree with colleagues here. It was an early indication of the isolation of the regime. And an early indication of the international community's condemnation of actions. I think at the early stage, that helped to cement a sense of the fact that the regime and Gaddafi in particular have gone beyond the bounds of normal international community relations. Again, all these things are done and designed that the penny will drop as quickly as possible, but recognising the reality of the situation, it's only one part of that process.

But was it the right thing to do to indicate international concern and disapproval? Yes, I think it was. It shows that these days the reach of international justice is long and its patience is remarkable and timescales don't matter. That is a modifier on behaviour not only on Libya, but possibly elsewhere. So I think it had great significance. As we discussed earlier, it may not necessarily be a bar to any other action that needs to be taken for Gaddafi to leave.