

# The long road ahead for Libya

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Supporting the Libyan opposition in their quest for democracy is becoming a task more involved than the West originally thought. Overthrowing Moammar Gadhafi could be just the first step down a longer road of building a new nation in Libya.

A difficult fact remains: Libya has been under the incredibly odd rule of Gadhafi since 1979, and establishing a new government will require a new system from top to bottom.

Gadhafi has no official position, yet he has ruled the country. His sons, likewise, have no titles yet are still granted authority. Also, "Gadhafi makes the key decisions, but there are no formal institutions through which he makes them," states a report from the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington.

The country's political system is a loose mishmash of socialist and Islamic theories written in Gadhafi's "Green Book," and its structure includes frequent shifting roles of his lieutenants. This "makes it difficult for outsiders to understand Libyan politics," according to the U.S. Department of State's (DOS) description of Libya.

Nation-building in Libya will mean not only reconstructing its political, social, legal, and economic systems; but also creating "for the first time of the kinds of rules, mutual obligations, and checks-and-balances that mark modern states and how they interact with their societies," said Dirk Vandewalle, of Dartmouth College, in an April 6 testimony before the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, according to a transcript.

Since 95 percent of the country's income rests in oil and natural gas, distributing this economy and preventing it from falling into a single base of power will be necessary in order to prevent another dictator from rising, according to Vandewalle, author of "Libya Since 1969."

Experience gained from nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan could prove invaluable to Libya, but the undertaking is one the U.S. is wary of shouldering. The responsibility could fall on NATO, yet the reverberations of a changed focus could result in troops being shifted from efforts in Afghanistan—a move that would also impact U.S. operations there.

Libya does show promise, however, as its rebel-formed interim government, the Interim Transitional National Council, says it is ready to steer the country into elections and writing a constitution.

The council states on its website that the country is faced with two choices: "Either we achieve freedom and race to catch up with humanity and world developments, or we are shackled and enslaved under the feet of the tyrant Moammar Gadhafi where we shall live in the midst of history."

A main concern is whether fighting will continue after Gadhafi is gone. This factor will mark the difference between requiring a military occupation to guard civilians from insurgent forces, or simply assisting in building a

system of governance.

The country is currently divided in more ways than one, facing not only opposing rebel and pro-Gadhafi forces, but also tensions between different tribal groups and even different provinces. The interim government, meanwhile, has "no clear true vision" on how to bring the opposing sides together, or how it will deal with those that supported the Gadhafi regime, according to Vandewalle.

## A GROUND BATTLE

President Obama made it clear why he thinks it's important for the United States to assist Libyan rebels.

Had Gadhafi been allowed to crush the opposition with little care for civilians in his path, "the democratic impulses that are dawning across the region would be eclipsed by the darkest form of dictatorship, as repressive leaders concluded that violence is the best strategy to cling to power," Obama said at the National Defense University on March 28.

Meanwhile, "The writ of the United Nations Security Council would have been shown to be little more than empty words, crippling that institution's future credibility to uphold global peace and security," he added.

The U.S. decision to focus on enforcing a no-fly zone and assisting the opposition with air support was made largely to avoid yet another ground war. Standing by the opposition, however, may soon require more than just airstrikes, as calls are now being made for additional support.

Poorly armed and with little training, fighting Gadhafi's army is a difficult task for the opposition. The United States and NATO have been wary of offering this support.

Apart from taking on a third ground war, a large part of the hesitation ties into not wanting to become responsible for carrying the country through the subsequent nation-building process, and shouldering the costs that come with it.

"Most troubling, we don't know what will be required of the United States if there is an unanticipated escalation in the war or an outcome that leads to U.S. participation in the reconstruction of Libya," said Sen. Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in a transcript of an April 6 hearing.

Still, since the United States and NATO have already stepped in to support, seeing the conflict through to the end may rest on their shoulders.

The opposition has "not proven capable of holding on to gains deep in pro-Gadhafi territory," said Foreign Relations Committee Chair John Kerry during the hearing. "They obviously need assistance and it is appropriate that the international community is stepping up to the task."

"However the situation ends in Libya—with regime collapse or a rebel military victory or an extended stalemate—the process of putting Libya back together will be a difficult one. But it is a task where the United States, the United Nations, and the Arab League all have roles to play," Kerry said.

# Breaking the cycle of poverty in Pakistan

## POVERTY CONTINUED FROM A1

"Parveen, put some water on the stove for tea, leave everything, and hurry," I replied. Then I heard my mother yelling from the kitchen.

Parveen left the jahroo on floor and walked briskly toward the kitchen; this is a routine start to her workday. Over the years my family has really come to feel that Parveen is a part of our family, and we have come to trust her. She has worked for us for 14 years and is one of the most honest people I know, hardworking and dedicated. She often does extra chores and comes to help when we have special occasions. She is caring and friendly and helps in anyway possible.

Parveen works at other houses too, cleaning and doing household chores with only one dream in her heart, to see her children achieve success.

Like the revolutions of the ceiling fan, people's lives pass through cycles. Most of us spend our whole lives in the same cycle as it takes a mighty heart to change it. Parveen's family is one of those, however, that have brought their lives into a new and better rhythm through sacrifice, hard work, and a strong belief in each other.

## PARVEEN'S FAMILY

A couple of miles away from our house, Parveen's husband, Ashiq, works as a janitor in Pakistan's Federal Investigation Authority headquarters (FIA). Ashiq barely escaped with his life when a suicide bomber attacked the FIA on the morning of March 11, 2008. The attacker rammed a small truck packed with explosives into the front gate of the FIA compound and blew the building to kingdom come.

Ashiq had been cleaning the lavatory just before the blast. His supervisor came in and told him to come outside. As soon as Ashiq stepped out the front of the building, the Taliban attacker struck. Ashiq sustained minor injuries but his supervisor died on the spot.

Ashiq's workday is long. He starts by taking his daughters to their physical training session at 7 a.m. Then he takes his wife to work. He helps Parveen with her sweeping because her eyesight is deteriorating and she can no longer see well.

Ashiq then goes to do his janitorial work at the FIA. At 4 p.m. he takes his daughters to their judo training, and then he goes to his supervisor's house to do handyman chores. At the end of his day he drives a rickshaw (small motorcycle taxi) until late in the evening.

Parveen and Ashiq belong to what is considered the lowest class in Pakistan; they are poor and in the minority as Christians. The only work available to them is odd jobs or employment as household servants.

According to the Pakistani Constitution, Christians are equal to all other citizens. However, in practice, the jobs on the lowest rungs of the ladder—street sweeping, maid positions, and other manual labour—are often done by Christians in Pakistan.

## BELIEF IN EDUCATION

Despite this, for Parveen and Ashiq, economic poverty seems to have given them a deeper understanding of the essence of life. Though they are not educated themselves, they have developed a deep faith in the value of education and believe that a good education can secure their daughters' futures.

Through the family's determined effort, Parveen and Ashiq's two eldest daughters, Ambreen, 23, and Humaira, 21, have completed the equivalent of two years of college in the United States. The girls are the first in their whole family to pursue higher education.

Ambreen said her education has given her knowledge that she would not have otherwise. "I value that very much," she said, adding that she is trying to instill a sense of the importance of education into her younger brother who is not so keen to study.

"I explain the importance of finishing his basic high school education to him each day," she said.

Ambreen and Humaira both work for Pakistan's Water and Energy sector (WAPDA) as competitive judo practitioners. They have been doing judo for seven years, beginning when they were in high school. They were among the first girls in Pakistan to compete and train in the marital art.

Their judo instructor, Mr. Naveed, at first trained them free of cost. Now they earn a monthly salary and get bonuses if they win competitions.

Parveen and Ashiq's oldest son, Zubar, 21, has not developed much interest in school, despite his sisters' and parents' encouragement. Their youngest son, Vas, 15, on the other hand, is an excellent student. His passion is science and his dream is to go to Forman Christian College, a top science college in Pakistan. The cost of a year at the college, about \$2,000, is more than Parveen earns in a year.

For many generations Parveen and Ashiq's families worked just to put food on the table and no one valued education. Parveen changed that. "I saw how well educated people behaved and I just knew I wanted my children to get a good education," she said. "That was my wish from the start."

Parveen, who learned to read at the age of 16 with the help of her employer, has been known to stay up with her own children, sometimes until midnight, to help them with their work.

## WORK ETHIC INHERITANCE

Parveen's mother cleaned in many different peoples' homes to make a living. Parveen's father did physical labour. Parveen said her mother's example greatly influenced her own approach to life.

Both her daughters say it is their parents' sacrifices that have allowed them to achieve so much, beating the odds, to become the first in their family line to fulfill their mental and physical potential.

And the girls are not afraid to seek adventure and imagine achieving their potential. Humaira said her dream is to become the women's judo world champion. She appears well on her way, having travelled to seven Asian countries and won two bronze medals.

"Travelling and competing in judo games have helped me to get to know people and be able to judge their characters, something I would not have been able to learn if I stayed at home," she said.

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