

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman**

**For Immediate Release
2008/T26-3**

September 5, 2008

REMARKS

**Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
And Abdulrahman Muhammad Shalgam,
Secretary of the General People's Committee
For Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation**

**September 5, 2008
Tripoli, Libya**

(6:00 p.m. EDT)

SECRETARY SHALGAM: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much, Minister Shalgam. Thank you very much for welcoming me here in Libya, and I would also like to thank Leader Qadhafi for welcoming me this evening.

We did indeed have a wide-ranging discussion in this moment in which the United States and Libya affirmed their desire to move forward in a positive way, toward a positive relationship. This has been made possible by difficult decisions that have been taken. It has been made possible by the hard work of a lot of people. It has been made possible by being able to deal as well as we can with issues of the past. And it has been made possible because Libya and the United States, I think, have established that we have many challenges in common and we talked about those challenges.

The Minister has really outlined most of them: issues in Africa, issues in the Maghreb, counterterrorism and the importance of that campaign. We've also talked about Libya's opening to the world and internal developments here and how Libya sees its future. And so all in all, it's been a very fruitful set of discussions and I very much look forward, Minister, to future discussions. I also look forward to the Libyan people and the American people getting to know each other better. We will soon sign an agreement on educational and cultural exchange and that will make it possible for more Libyan students to come to the United States. And I hope that Americans will take advantage to come here. Thank you very much.

SECRETARY SHALGAM: (Via interpreter.) Thanks. Thanks, Condi.

QUESTION: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY RICE: I'm sorry, any opportunities --

QUESTION: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I think we have made progress in concrete ways. We are working on a trade and investment agreement, a framework, which will allow the improvement of the climate for investment, which I know very many American firms wish to do. We, as I mentioned, are negotiating the educational and cultural agreement, which will allow for exchange of people. We are cooperating on a number of issues, including – during Libya's membership in the Security Council of the United Nations. And so I think we're off to a good start. It is only a start, but after many, many years, I think it is – it's a very good thing that the United States and Libya are establishing a way forward.

QUESTION: Thank you. Madame Secretary, I'm wondering if you could just give us some more – some details about your talks with Leader Qadhafi, the meeting that you had and then your dinner which happened, you know, in this compound that President Reagan ordered bombed in 1986. Was it cordial? Was this mentioned?

And I'm also wondering if you could tell us if you are convinced -- did you come away from this meeting convinced that the Libyan leadership has, in fact, made the strategic shift that you think it – (inaudible) – and does Libya have a future as a full-fledged friend and ally of the United States?

SECRETARY RICE: The relationship has been moving in a good direction for a number of years now, and I think tonight does now mark a new phase in that relationship. Look, we have a long way to go. I think it's not surprising to anyone that the United States and Libya don't always agree on every issue.

But I do think we have established a good framework for our relationship. In my discussions with Leader Qadhafi, for instance, we talked a good deal about Africa. And I'll give you one specific -- the issue of AFRICOM came up and concerns about what the United States was doing with AFRICOM, were we looking to military bases on the African continent, were we looking to a large military presence. And I said to Leader Qadhafi that we clearly weren't getting through about what we meant for AFRICOM; that this was to be – to help Africans help themselves in peacekeeping, in counterterrorism work. And so very often, the conversations were at that level of concreteness and detail. And I think that's a very good thing. We were able to clear up misunderstandings of that kind. And we did talk about learning from the lessons of the past. We talked about the importance of moving forward.

The United States, I've said many times, doesn't have any permanent enemies. And I don't have any doubt that Libya has made some important strategic choices. We will continue to work on this relationship. And it comes at a good time because there is much work to do. Here in the Maghreb, there's much work to do. In Africa there's much work to do. We talked about the Middle East and issues there. So this is a good time for a constructive relationship between the United States and Libya to begin to emerge.

QUESTION: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY SHALGAM: (In Arabic.)

QUESTION: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY RICE: Oh, yes. Well, we hope to have an ambassador soon. This is something that we are discussing with our Congress. The – this will be helped very much, I think, by the agreement that we have and that I am confident the parties intend to implement on the settlement of claims. This has been of concern to our Congress, and I look forward to the implementation of that agreement. But I hope that we will be able to establish – have an ambassador here soon.

I might say that in the meantime, I met today with our people here, Americans and Libyans who are working to improve this relationship. And so we already have a significant diplomatic presence here from many U.S. Government agencies, and therefore, we are already very hard at work in the relationship.

MR. MCCORMACK: The last question to Sue Fleming.

QUESTION: This is a question first for Foreign Minister Shalgam. Why is Fathi El-Jahmi still being detained and held in a hospital room in Tripoli? And is it deemed a crime, or was it, for him to talk to a U.S. Diplomat?

And then Secretary Rice, did you raise the issue of Fathi El-Jahmi and other human rights concerns with Leader Qadhafi? And did he give you any assurances on these particular cases?

SECRETARY SHALGAM: (In Arabic.)

SECRETARY RICE: I've emphasized during my stay here, among many issues that we talked about, that it is important for us to maintain an open dialogue, including on issues of human rights. I have raised the cases here, and I've done so in a respectful manner. But as this relationship goes forward and deepens, it will continue to be important for us to have transparency and to talk about these issues in a respectful way. And that is what I have done during my visit. Thank you.

SECRETARY SHALGAM: Thank you. Thank you.

###