The National Council on US-Libya Relation

July 29, 2016

The Mayflower Hotel, Washington D.C.

Participants’ Bios

**Hafed Al Ghwell**

Hafed is Senior Advisor at Maxwell Stamp Inc, the international economic firm, where he specializes in Middle East political economy issues and leads the global strategic communications practice. He is also Senior Advisor with Oxford Analytica, the global risk consultancy and was until recently a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Hariri Center for the Middle East in Washington DC. Hafed is a veteran commentator on the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa. His analyses are widely published in international media, including ABC News, BBC, DW, Al- Jazeera English and Arabic Channels, NPR, PBS Front Line and NewsHour, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Times, UPI, Newsweek, the National Newspaper, Gulf News, Washington Diplomat, among many others. Hafed served as Advisor to the Dean of the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank Group until end of 2015. From 2009 to March 2012, he was an Advisor in the Office of the Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa and Program Coordinator in the Office of the Vice President of UN and External Affairs, also at the World Bank.

**Ali Augali**

Aujali was first posted to the [Libyan embassy](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/List_of_diplomatic_missions_of_Libya) in [London](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/London) as Third Secretary in 1971. In 1976 he was posted to the Libyan embassy in [Kuala Lumpur](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Kuala_Lumpur), Malaysia, before being promoted in 1981 to the post of Ambassador to Malaysia. Subsequently Aujali was the Libyan ambassador to [Argentina](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Argentina) (1984–1988) and then [Brazil](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Brazil) (1988–1994). And became Ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2011. He also served as the [chargé D’Affairs](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Charg%C3%A9_d%27affaires) to [Canada](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Canada) (2001 to 2004).

Aujali was formerly [Ambassador to the United States](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Ambassador_to_the_United_States) on behalf of the [National Transitional Council](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/National_Transitional_Council) from 15 August 2011 to 1 November 2012. He previously held the position from January 2009 until February 2011, when he resigned in the wake of the [Libyan uprising](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/2011_Libyan_Civil_War). He joined the National Transitional Council soon after; on 9 August the U.S. State Department confirmed that it had handed the Libyan embassy in Washington, D.C. to the NTC, and Aujali was re-accredited by the United States as Libya's Ambassador on 15 August.

Aujali was nominated for minister of foreign affairs by the Ziadan government at the end of October 2012 but he declined the offer and resigned from his ambassadorial post in December 31, 2012

**Krista Bremer**

Krista is an American author whose essays have appeared in The New York Times Magazine, The Sunday Times (London), O: The Oprah Magazine, and elsewhere. Her work has been featured on National Public Radio and in the PBS series Arab-American Stories and has been translated and reprinted all over the world. Her memoir, My Accidental Jihad: A Love Story, was published in April 2014. She

lives in North Carolina with her husband Ismail and their two children and works as associate publisher of the literary magazine The Sun.

**Ethan Chorin**

Ethan spent more than 18 years working in Africa and the Middle East as energy and port executive, a U.S. diplomat and currently, as CEO of Perim Associates LLC.   I served from 2004-2006 in Tripoli, Libya as commercial/economic attaché, and received a Meritorious Honor Award for my work in promoting U.S. business interests in Libya.  I returned to Libya in 2011 as Co-Founder of the Avicenna Group, a 501c3 humanitarian organization dedicated to building trauma infrastructure in Benghazi.  I am the author of two books on Libya, Exit the Colonel: The Hidden History of the Libyan Revolution (Public Affairs, 2012), and Translating Libya (Saqi, 2008, and Darf, 2015).  My Op-Eds and dispatches on Libya have appeared in The New York Times,  Foreign Policy, Forbes, The Middle East Institute, Words Without Borders, and others.   A two-time Fulbright Fellow (Yemen, Jordan), I hold a Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley in Agricultural and Resource Economics, an M.A. in International Policy Studies from Stanford and a B.A. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Yale.

**Marguerite Dehler**

Retired bureaucrat with Government of Canada – strategic planning / marketing / administration with the Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE), Privy Council Office (PCO), and Ministerial Office of the Government Leader in the Senate, Senate of Canada, and Member of Parliament’s Legislative Assistant in House of Commons.  
  
Has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ottawa University, Communications and Journalism. Served on Board of Directors Artist-run Galleries Saw and 101 and was Gallery Director/Curator of special events. The US-led Gulf War spurred more focused political views. Created, organized and led various local and national campaigns raising awareness of Canadian arts including: “Sending Ottawa an Ear” which culminated in a press conference on Parliament Hill which Members of Parliament from all parties attended.  
  
Taught painting, photography and English and meet Libyan students many who had returned to Libya when the Feb17 revolution began, became active on Twitter and later volunteered with the Canadian Libyan Council (CLC) as social media coordinator. Also worked with various groups and individuals to help raise awareness, contacts and assist with the positive growth of Libya e.g., Save Cyrene World Heritage Sites in Libya / UNESCO campaign, Libya Al-Shefa / Libyan American Psychiatrist and trauma expert Dr. Omar Reda, as well as local groups– e.g., Carlington Community Association, etc

**Rihab Elhaj**

Rihab has enjoyed ten years of working in  human development, capacity building and democratization. She is especially passionate about how technology can transform the way we govern just as it fundamentally transformed how we socialize and do business.

In 2006, Rihab was nominated by the UN as the Youth Delegate to Libya for the Millennium Development Goals. Facing strong political opposition to grassroots organizing, she pursued a coaching career to approach human development through the private sector. She established Inara, an executive coaching and leadership development company. In February 2011, she founded the New Libya Foundation (NLF) to help build Libya's new civil society. As the President, and Executive Director of the

NLF, she lead a staff of 28 through the implementation of fourteen programs in four cities, including five capacity building centers, the training of over 3,000 activists and assistance in establishing 67 grassroots organizations. Rihab has consulted on regional policy for clients such as IREX, the UNHCR, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems.

Rihab has recently founded a Civic Technology Start-up in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is currently consulting for the World Bank’s Global Governance Practice on their new MENA civic engagement policy framework. Rihab has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Marymount University, and a Master in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as an Edward S. Mason Fellow, and a recipient of the Public Service Fellowship. As a Desmond Tutu African Leadership Fellow, she is also committed to strengthening Libya's economic and cultural ties to the continent.

**Bubaker Garrari**

As a New media manager Baker researched and provided information about political events in Libya.  
Wrote and submitted stories on the rights and education of women in Libya.  
Reported on Middle-Eastern devices and their use in the marketplace.

As Director and ESOL Baker prepared and taught training workshops. Developed curriculum and assessment criteria. Supervised ESOL Oral Examiners and reviewed assessments for quality assurance. Baker also worked as an advisor to the US Mission in Benghazi where he analyzed and prepared in-depth information about political and economic events.

**Wendy Keslick**

Wendy owns and operates a health and wellness company that provides services to corporations, groups, and individuals. She is a graduate of Temple University, Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy, and the Spirit of Yoga teacher training program. In 2007, she founded and became director of the non-profit Children Creating Bridges, which later became Galen International Health. Her volunteer activities have taken her on multiple trips to work with refugees in Syria and with orphans in Ethiopia. In 2012-2013 she was an editor at Elephant Journal and also completed their social media apprenticeship program. She is a published writer at Elephant Journal, Productive Muslim, and FUTUREtakes, a publication of the Center for Trans-cultural Foresight, Inc., where she served on their international editorial board. She is currently the translation coordinator and copy editor for the Rose+Croix Journal. Over the past few years she has become an advocate for Libyans whose voices have been lost behind political agendas and humanitarian crises leading others to shape their narrative during conflict.

**Karim Mezran**

Karim is the Senior Resident Fellow for North Africa at the Atlantic Council’s Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. In addition, he is an adjunct professor of Middle East studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) where he teaches courses on the history and politics of North Africa. Previously he was director of the Center for American Studies in Rome.  Dr. Mezran holds a PhD in international relations from SAIS Johns Hopkins University. His recent publications include “Libya: Negotiations for Transition” in Arab Spring: Negotiating in the Shadow of the Intifadat, “Libya” in Political and Constitutional Transitions in North Africa: Actors and Factors, and “Libya in Transition: from Jamahiriya to Jumhuriyyah?” in The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World.

**Wolfgang PUSZTAI**

**(Freelance security & policy analyst with a special focus on the MENA region)**

Wolfgang Pusztai has both a military and an academic background in strategy. His education includes a Master of Science in Political Science from the University of Vienna and a Master of Science in National Security Strategy from the National Defense University / National War College in Washington D.C. He is one of the few Distinguished Graduates from this senior-level education facility.

Wolfgang´s vast military experience ranges from various positions on the strategic level in the Austrian MoD/General Staff to several international assignments (national, EU and NATO). He has also worked for a long time in the intelligence business. From 2007 to 2012 he was Austria´s Defense Attaché to Italy, Greece, Tunisia and Libya and spent quite some time on the ground during the “Arab Spring”. This included the organization of the evacuation of hundreds of Austrian and EU citizens from Libya at the beginning of the Revolution and various reconnaissance missions.

Wolfgang has lectured and written extensively about strategy as well as about the developments in North Africa, in particular Libya and Tunisia, and the Islamic State. He is well-known for his accurate assessment, forecasts, and country risk analyses.

**Farage A. Sassi**

Principal of Sassi’s Engineering (California/New York)

A practicing professional engineer (P.E.) with extensive & diverse experience in civil/structural engineering. Project manager and owner’s representative of multi-story mixed use high rise in New York. Design and Transfer Of Technology training for Microchip Clean Room Facilities  in South Korea , Airport and Harbor Facilities &  Multi Story Parking Garage buildings in California, Sports Climbing Walls  in Iceland, Solar Energy Plants, Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional Buildings and Facilities in the United States and abroad.

Led design efforts, trained staff and directed teams for a multitude of Seismic Retrofit in California and across the United States. Designed structural support systems for Solar Energy Panels and other Mechanical Equipment, Water Tanks, Liquid and Gas Tanks, Industrial Storage Containers and Silos.

Consulted and provided On-Site supervision for the Demolition of the Bay Bridge Approaches to San Francisco and other bridges across California in addition to the following projects:

* Two of Farage’s projects (Oakland Airport Terminal Buildings) were **published as design examples** in “McGraw-Hill Professional Engineering Series, **Structural Renovation of Buildings, Methods, Details and Design Examples**, By Alexander Newman”
* His Sports Climbing Wall project in Reykjavik, Iceland was chosen along with other projects as **Excellence in Structural Design 2003** – State of California Structural Engineers Association.
* **The New York Times and in 8-Days Paper of the U.N. (N.Y.)** – Published articles about for the 25 story Libya House in Manhattan, N.Y.
* Amongst other commendations for Farage’s Designs**, the Oakland International Airport received**a commendation from the **Federal Aviation (FAA)**for innovative planning and design.

An activist interested in promoting:

1.       Better mutual understanding between the American and Libyan peoples.

2.       Social and Technological Advancement of Libya through Transfer of Technology, and Education.

3.       Advancement of a Civil, Civilian, Democratic Libyan State, Unified Secular, Non Sectarian State based on Human Rights and Equality for all, free of the rule of the Military and/or Religious groups.

**Hassan Sassi**

Hassan has taught engineering and math courses for almost three decades at prominent universities in the State of California and abroad and was the Chair of the Civil Engineering department for a period of two years at an engineering school.

He has participated in numerous public speaking events that included LAUSD/iSEE program for high school graduates in anticipation to guide them through the many choices they face in applying to technical schools; topic covered “The Art of Structural Engineering”, which was also presented in Art Forums and Scientific conferences. Dr. Sassi also sat on the Board of Directors of the United Minority Contractors Association (UMCA) and developed a training program to train minority youth in the construction field and received 1993 Community Outreach Award.

He currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Libyan American Organization, (NGO), a board member of the newly formed the National Council for US-Libya Relations, (NGO), the Walnut Valley Unified School District Bond Oversight Committee, the Walnut Historic Preservation Committee, a cofounder of the Friends of MESTO (www.mesto.org). He also served on the Board of Directors of the Arab Film Festival (www.arabfilmfestival.org) in the State of California and Kan Zaman Community Ensemble.

He has been recently awarded 2014 US Congress Achievement Award, the Arab American Association of Engineers and Architects 2014 Award and 2009 Los Angeles Unified School District Achievement Award.

**Hani Shennib**

Dr. Shennib is an internationally recognized cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon and an opinion leader in health care policies and international relations. He has a keen interest in foreign policy and has played key roles in international conflict resolution. He participated in the Middle East world economic forum as part of the Canadian delegation. Chaired the Libya European Benghazi Children with AIDS Working Group and made presentations to the European Union Parliament on this subject of Bulgaria-Libya conflict. He is in the Canadian Who’s Who registry. He held leadership posts like president, National Council on Canada Arab Relations, President of the Quebec Muslim Association, and was appointed member of the board of governors of Concordia University in Montreal in 2002.

Dr. Shennib serves regularly as an advisor in designing regional health care models worldwide and has participated in the development of educational and health care projects and reviews for numerous

countries including Bosnia, Kazakhstan, UAE, Egypt and Libya and received an honorary PhD from Kazakhstan Institute of Medical Sciences at Astana for his contributions.

Dr. Shennib is currently a Professor at the College of Medicine, University of Arizona and Adjunct Full Professor at McGill University Faculty of Medicine in Montreal. After completing his postgraduate residency training in general surgery and cardiothoracic surgery at London University in the UK and McGill University in Montreal he underwent further fellowship training in Thoracic Surgery and Transplantation at the University of Toronto and in Vascular and Endovascular therapy at the Arizona Heart Institute. He holds the American Board Certifications in Surgery, Thoracic Surgery and Vascular Medicine. He is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the American College of Surgeons and is a member of numerous specialty societies, co- editor of medical journals and has published over 200 original articles. Dr. Shennib also holds a Master of Science degree in Experimental Surgery from McGill University. He is an inventor and holds 17 patents.

**William L Smith**

Mr. Smith serves as both LMI’s Regional Director, North Africa and Branch Manager in Tripoli, Libya. With the emerging political and operational complexities in Libya, Mr. Smith redeployed from Tripoli in mid-2014 and is currently assigned, pending his return to North Africa, to the Department of State to provide planning support to develop a comprehensive interagency plan for the diplomatic return to Libya. Since joining LMI he has supported a wide variety of assignments to include: providing on-site planning assistance to the Management Officer U.S. Embassy Afghanistan and a follow-on assignment providing planning support to Near Eastern Affairs-South Central Asia / Executive Office at the Department of State; supporting the U.S. Institute for Peace with a congressionally mandated review and report on the Quadrennial Defense Review; as a member of a concept development team, assisting the Department of Defense improve interagency coordination of theater and country team security cooperation plans; leading a LMI management assistance team in a year long, on-site, effort to assess Iraqi Ministerial level capacity development; and managing the Logistics Test and Experimentation team of Boeing test engineers in support of the Army’s Future Combat System (FCS) program. Mr. Smith is a retired U.S. Marine Corps colonel with a diverse operational and training background. He has commanded operational units tasked with responding to world-wide contingencies, worked in complex political environments to include an assignment as a United Nations Peacekeeper with the US Military Observer Group Palestine, served in various staff assignments at the Pentagon, and led training organizations to include serving as the Commander of the Officer Candidates School and the Director, Coalition and Special Warfare Center. Mr. Smith is a distinguished graduate of the Naval War College and has earned a Masters in National Security and Strategic Studies, Masters in Business Administration, and Bachelors in Business Administration in Finance from the University of Texas at Austin. Mr. Smith is a member of the Society for International Development and a lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion. His volunteer civic duties include serving as the Chairman, Board of Directors of a national nonprofit youth program, the Young Marines, that has been in continuous service since 1959 with 10,000 youth members and 2,500 adult volunteers active in over forty States.

**Ismail Suayah**

Ismail is a Libyan-American software engineer, former geo-marine scientist, and political activist who is particularly passionate about bringing peace and stability to his native country of Libya. Ismail lives in the Triangle Area of North Carolina with his wife, author Krista Bremer, and their two children. Ismail

Contributed opinion articles to the Libya Herald and Tripoli Post and helped create the Libyan American Organization (LAO)

**Mahmoud Usta Omar**

With over 14 years of specialized expertise in the field of clinical and retail pharmacy within Libya, the broader Middle East region and internationally, in both the private- and pubic-sector, I possess extensive qualifications, skills and experience in performing professional, managerial and administrative assignments primarily for preventive, corrective and predictive medicine; with particular emphasis on

personnel management, human resource development, services delivery, human relations, customer satisfaction, market development, quality control and high-level official representations.

To date, my assignments have ranged from mid-level managerial positions responsible for customer service in multinational pharmaceutical companies to senior official positions in the Libyan Ministry of Health; including as the Health Attaché in the Embassy of the State of Libya to the United States in Washington, D.C.

In the course of my professional career, I have also gained international and cross-cultural experience that enables me to work effectively with professionals from different cultural backgrounds, and I have acquired unique leadership skills combined with the ability to work effectively under pressure and in challenging environs.