

The Trump Administration and Libya: The Necessity for Engagement

by [Ben Fishman \(/experts/ben-fishman\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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With President Donald Trump participating in his first international summits, several of America's EU and Gulf allies will be considering the future of Libya. Trump's statement in April that he sees no role for the United States in Libya not only signaled a lack of interest in the fragile state, but gave license to others with interests in Libya -- from France and Italy to Egypt, the UAE, and even Russia -- to pursue their own agendas for Libya. Allowing this free-for-all to continue would be a mistake.

This new paper lays out the case for U.S. engagement in Libya to

- ▶ minimize violence;
- ▶ limit the presence of extremist groups;
- ▶ maximize Libya's prospects for stability; and
- ▶ prevent Russia from establishing a foothold in the southern Mediterranean.

Drawing on past experience as National Security Council director for North Africa and Jordan, Ben Fishman lays out a series of political, security, and economic steps the Trump administration should consider to demonstrate U.S. leadership on a country whose future intersects with the interests of not only the United States but many of our closest European and Middle Eastern partners.

THE AUTHOR

Ben Fishman (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/ben-fishman>) is an associate fellow at The Washington Institute and a former director for North Africa and Jordan on the National Security Council. He has since served as a consulting senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, where he edited *North Africa in Transition: The Struggle for Democracies and Institutions*, and as an adjunct international security and defense policy analyst at the RAND Corporation. ❖

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