

LIBYA: US Corporate Predators Arrive in Tripoli

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Global Research, April 25, 2012
25 April 2012

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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A US-Libya Business Association (USLBA) delegation headed by US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Jose Fernandez arrived in Libya yesterday at the start of a five-day visit focusing on trade and investment.

The delegation includes 37 representatives from 20 US companies and organizations which represent a range of sectors including healthcare, education administration, training, energy, construction, logistics, infrastructure, construction support, vehicles and equipment, transportation, public safety, agriculture, public relations and telecommunications.

While in Libya, the delegation will travel to Tripoli and Benghazi to meet with senior Libyan national and local government officials, including Prime Minister Abdurrahim Al-Kib. The delegation will participate in events with private business groups from Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi to discuss national priorities in the rebuilding of the country.

They will also participate in two major trade shows for the oil and gas and infrastructure industries, which are taking place in Tripoli.

The delegation is joined by US Ambassador to Libya Gene Cretz.

"We are very grateful to US Ambassador Gene Cretz and the entire US embassy team in Libya," said USLBA Executive Director Chuck Dittrich.

"Ambassador Cretz has been a driving force in involving the US private sector in the rebuilding of Libya. Without his leadership and the dedication of his team, this delegation visit would not have been possible. We are excited to be here and look forward to a very productive week."

American business sees Libya as an important potential economic partner. "In the short term, in addition to the energy sector, the country offers opportunities for companies in the vocational training, healthcare and infrastructure sectors, and in the long term, opportunities in tourism development, financial services and banking, construction, agriculture and the digital economy," said Dittrich in a press statement.

"Among all of those with whom we've had an opportunity to meet here in Libya, we've found that American technology, entrepreneurship and creativity are met with a warm welcome. Long-term partnerships and collaborative new ventures, especially among emerging young business leaders in Libya are being formed, and we see vast opportunities to strengthen US-Libya economic ties now and in the future."

Dittrich was upbeat about Libyan progress.

“While much press coverage about Libya is focused on the historic political transition to representative government now underway, it ignores the underlying fact that Libya is already in the process of building a new economy focused on the nation’s private sector,” he said.

“Among the keys to generating and sustaining private sector growth, job creation and diversifying the economy is putting in place institutions and policies focused on governance, transparency, accountability, rule of law, property rights and access to finance.”

There is, he said “an energy and a true sense of optimism that day by day, things are moving forward”.

The challenge, he believed, would be “to create government institutions that allow an independent business community to keep growing to create the jobs necessary to move from an economy that is still reliant on public subsidies”.

Companies in the delegation include A-T Solutions, BAE Systems, The Boeing Company, ConocoPhillips Libya Waha, LTD, Daniel J. Edelman, Inc., Dow Chemical, ExxonMobil, FARMCO (Valmont Irrigation), Hess Corporation, Hill International, General Electric, the Institute of International Education, Marathon Oil Corporation, Motorola Solutions, NSI - Nasa Services International, Parsons, RMA Global Fleet Sales, the Sandi Group and WorkingBuildings, LLC.

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