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## From Law School to Diplomacy in Libya: Threading a Path Through the Foreign Service

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# From Law School to Diplomacy in Libya: Threading a Path Through the Foreign Service



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William Roebuck, U.S. Department of State  
March 2014



- Part I: Ariadne's Thread: A few opening observations, to serve as a guide.
  - Part II: The Foreign Service – Libya and Beyond
  - Part III: The Arab Spring: Some Lessons Learned
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# Diplomacy 101: A Lawyer Abroad



**Represent America  
to the World with the  
U.S. Department of State**





# Who We Are

Approximately

- 8,000 Officers in the Foreign Service
- U.S. Military marching Bands outnumber us





## Where We Are



- More than 270 posts abroad in 190 countries
  - Headquarters in Washington, D.C.
-



# Fellowships

- Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF):  
[www.pmf.opm.gov](http://www.pmf.opm.gov)
- Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs/Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program:  
[www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org)
- Charles B. Rangel Fellowship Program:  
[www.howard.edu/rjb/rangelprogram.htm](http://www.howard.edu/rjb/rangelprogram.htm)





# Foreign Service

- Foreign Service Officers promote U.S. interests and protect U.S. citizens at U.S. embassies and consulate posts overseas and in Washington, DC
  - 50,000 Foreign Service Nationals (local employees)
    - Most of the Foreign Service career is spent overseas
-



# Foreign Service Officers

FSOs declare one of the following career tracks when applying:

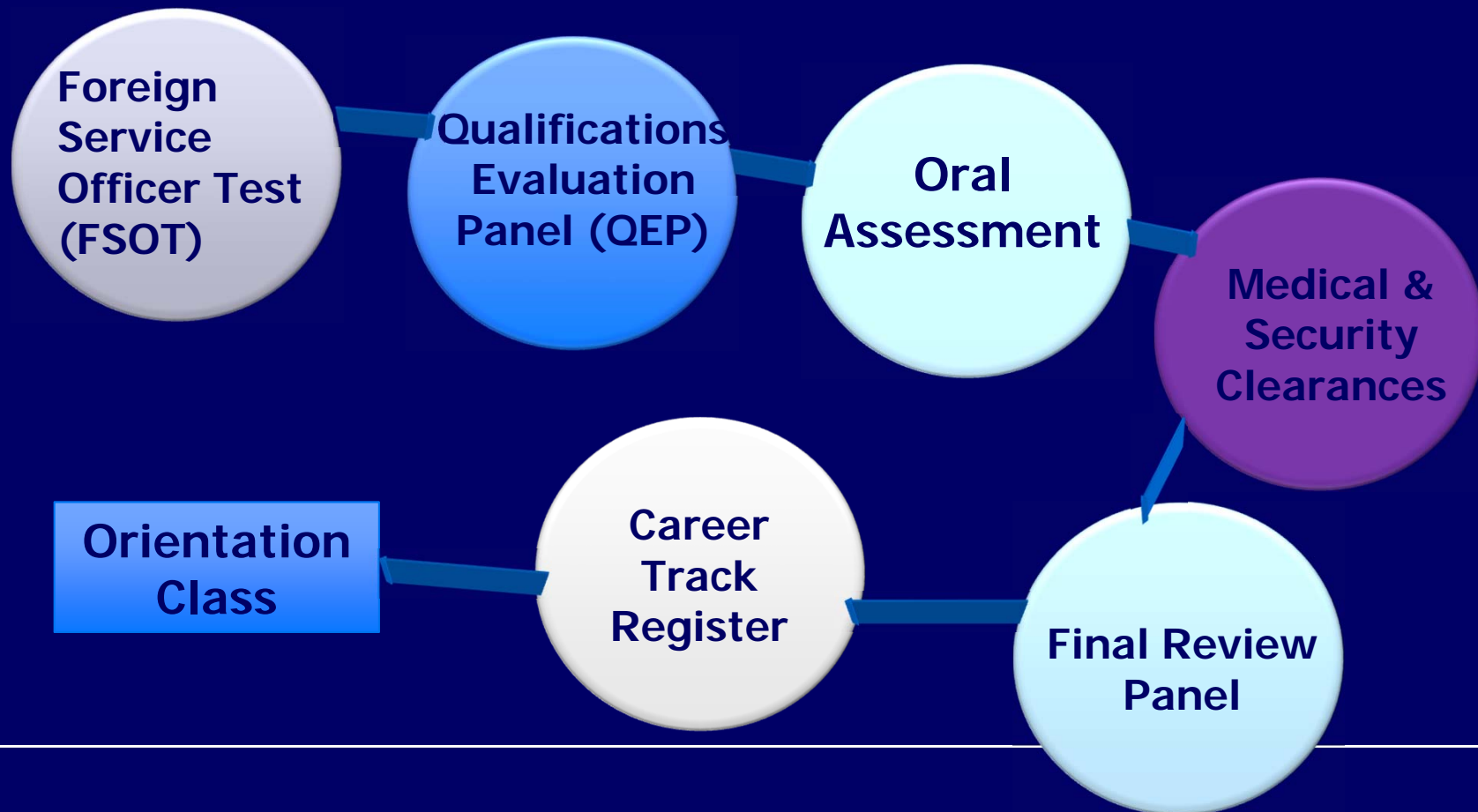
- Political Affairs
- Economic Affairs
- Consular Affairs
- Public Diplomacy
- Management Affairs
- Protecting American Citizens

11,000 Civil Service Employees

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# How Do I Become an FSO?





## Key Reasons to Join the Foreign Service

- Public service
  - Overseas lifestyle
  - Challenging work
  - Lifelong learning
  - Constant variety and change
  - Learn foreign languages
-



# Questions?

- [careers.state.gov](http://careers.state.gov)
  - iOS and Android mobile app - DOSCareers
  - Diplomats in Residence
  - Facebook Careers in Foreign Affairs Group
  - Facebook U.S. Department of State – Careers Fan Page
  - [Twitter.com/doscareers](https://twitter.com/doscareers) or @doscareers
  - LinkedIn Careers in Diplomacy Group
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# Three Americans Killed in Gaza Blast





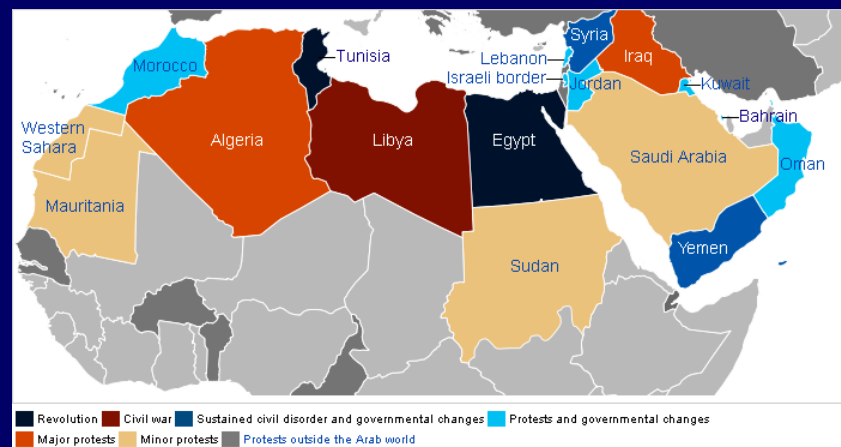
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# Defining Arab Spring



- The series of revolutionary or near revolutionary developments that erupted in North Africa in early 2011.







# My Work over Past Three Years, Focusing on North Africa and Arab Spring



## Causes:

- Unemployment, corruption and
- lack of basic
- freedom as drivers
- instability;





# Working on Libya, in Tripoli, Benghazi (and Washington)



- Charge d'Affaires at U.S. Embassy in Tripoli
- Meeting with Libyan Prime Minister Zeidan at his Tripoli office





# Liberation Day – Benghazi, October 2011, with Chris Stevens



- 50,000 Libyans out celebrating their freedom.





# Working with Senior U.S. Officials



- Working with U.S. officials to shape the USG diplomatic response post-Arab Spring:
  - Developing assistance for Libya and Tunisia (helping them build their militaries; offering scholarships and education)
  - Briefing members of Congress on our work with Libyans to collect weapons.





# America's role post-Arab Spring? Right Side of History?



- These revolutions are not ours.
  - But we can offer support for peaceful, democratic reform.
  - Need to be smart in how we go about it: Help societies economically to create jobs, fight corruption, restructure debt.
  - And help them to strengthen political parties, electoral institutions, and civil society.
  - U.S. does not fund particular parties or candidates.
  - Support forces of reconciliation and tolerance.
  - Encourage countries undergoing reform to move faster and more robustly.
-



# Could we have responded differently?



- Sided with Mubarak or Ben Ali? Yes, but at enormous risk and cost to our interests and values.
  - The wrong side of history?
  - Then? or Now?
  - No crystal ball; just a rearview mirror;
  - Limits to our ability to shape events
- 





# Support for Democracy: Is it Enough?



- Elections are key; Peaceful, periodic transfer of power and protection of rights of women and minorities.
  - Respect for the rule of law, independent institutions, free expression, and a free press.
  - Why does America promote democracy one way in some countries and another way in others?
    - Our choices reflect other U.S. interests in the region: our fight against al-Qaida, defense of our allies, and a secure supply of energy. No “one size fits all” model.
-



# What about the Islamists? Can U.S. work with them?



- Not all Islamists are alike. Turkey and Iran are both governed by parties with religious roots.
  - But, Islamist parties committed to democracy must reject violence,
  - Abide by the rule of law and respect the freedoms of speech, religion, association, and assembly;
  - Respect the rights of women and minorities;
  - Must let go of power if defeated at the polls;
  - What parties call themselves is less important to us than what they actually do.
  - In Tunisia, U.S. has worked with an-Nahda.
-





# Other tools: Support for Education and Civil Society

