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## Rice Meets Gaddafi Son, Asks About Dissident



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### Text

**The meeting follows a landmark visit in September by Rice to Libya, the first by a U.S. secretary of state in half a century.**

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met the son of Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi on Thursday and raised the case of a leading political dissident held in Tripoli, the State Department said.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Rice hosted Gaddafi's son's, Saif al-Islam, at her Washington office, indicating a further warming of ties between the former foes.

"They talked about the broad range of U.S.-Libya relations. They also talked about developments within Libya itself," said McCormack of the meeting.

It follows a landmark visit in September by Rice to Libya, the first by a U.S. secretary of state in half a century.

<http://dalje.com/en-world/rice-meets-gaddafi-son-asks-about-dissident/205999>

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McCormack said Rice also spoke to Saif about ailing political dissident Fathi al-Jahmi, a former provincial governor held against his will in a Tripoli medical center.

"It's an issue that we have raised consistently over time, and we will continue to raise it," said McCormack, who did not indicate whether Saif gave any assurances over Jahmi.

The Libyan Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to questions about the issue.

Asked why Rice chose to meet Saif, McCormack said the son of the Libyan leader was viewed as influential.

"He is head of the Gaddafi Foundation, which is an important institution within Libya. So, again, while he may not hold an official government position, clearly, he's a person of influence within Libya."

Saif also played a key role negotiating the country's emergence from diplomatic isolation and is viewed by many as a leading advocate of change in Libya.

#### INFLUENTIAL

Asked if Rice specifically asked Saif to use his influence to get Jahmi released, McCormack said she had not.

"You don't prescribe something. You say, look, this case is an issue of concern. We urge this person's release," he said.

The jailed dissident's U.S.-based family has been critical of the State Department in the past and says it has not done enough to raise human rights concerns with Gaddafi.

Jahmi's brother, who lives near Boston, said his sibling was being held in a cockroach-ridden hospital in Tripoli and his family had very limited access to him.

He thanked Rice for raising his brother's case and said he hoped the Libyan government would respond positively.

"America has displayed goodwill, so I hope Col. Gaddafi seizes this opportunity to start a peaceful chapter with his people and Libyan-American relations," said Mohamed al-Jahmi.

"A good start would be the unconditional release of Fathi al-Jahmi and all political prisoners," he told Reuters.

The United States long treated Libya as a pariah, blaming it for violence including the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people and the 1986 bombing of a German disco that killed two U.S. citizens.



However, there has been a rapprochement in the past five years since Libya decided to give up its weapons of mass destruction programs in 2003.

At the end of Last month, Libya paid \$1.5 billion into a fund to settle long-standing cases of American victims of terrorism involving Libya, including the Lockerbie and German disco bombings.

Families of victims of those bombings held a news conference on Capitol Hill on Thursday to announce the final resolution of those claims.

"For many years, we were the forgotten victims of terrorism," said Kara Weipz, whose brother perished on the Pan Am flight over Lockerbie. "We are free now to close this chapter in our nightmare," she added.

