

Lima, 22 February 2011

Mr. Saif-al-Islam Gaddafi
Chairman of the Foundation and the Board
Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation

Dear Saif,

As you well know, I agreed to join the board of the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation to support your efforts – as you explained to me and the other board members and elaborated in your interviews with the press – for developing Libya's economy and democracy.

As the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace pointed out just last month, "the Gaddafi Foundation was the country's only address for complaints about torture, arbitrary detention, and disappearances. The Foundation issued its first human rights report in 2009, cataloguing abuses and calling for reforms, and a second report released in September 2010 regretted 'a dangerous regression' in civil society and called for authorities to lift their 'stranglehold' on the media. In the interim, Saif assisted Human Rights Watch in conducting a groundbreaking press conference which launched a report in Tripoli in December 2009."

In fact, the foundation's goals were human rights and political reforms, such as transparent elections, a new constitution, freedom of assembly and an open press. By its very name the foundation was committed to economic development and improving the lives of Libya's poor.

I viewed your goals to be in line with my mission – to help developing country's build modern, inclusive market economies through institutional reforms that empower the poor with the legal tools that they need to prosper. Also, as I understood it, your foundation fulfilled another important prerequisite of my work: independence from politics. As you will remember, at our meeting last December, the board passed a motion that changed your role from chair to honorary chair, thus emphasizing the separation of the charitable and human rights work of the foundation from any and all politics.

Sunday night, I listened to a broadcast of your speech to your fellow Libyans, and saw you take a political position. I cannot support that. In fact, I have never aligned myself to a political position or party in a foreign country.

I am well aware that no one at the moment can be certain of what is happening in your country or judge the reliability of the reports reaching us regarding the atrocities in recent days. I certainly cannot condone the violence and repression reported from Libya. With that in mind, I am hoping that you will be able to clarify what is going on – and your role in it.

Under the current circumstances, however, as I am sure you will understand, and pending clarification of what has occurred and what you yourself intend to do going forward, I cannot remain associated with the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation.

Please consider this my letter of resignation.

Sincerely yours,



Hernando de Soto