

House panel debates whether or not the administration's intervention in Libya was a mistake

As the number of terrorist attacks continue globally, Republicans are looking closely at the regions that are a source for the development of terrorists.

House Republicans, today, grilled the Obama administration for its intervention in Libya in 2011, which they argue led to the expansion of the Islamic State, and other terrorist organizations, in the region.

On the heels of the anniversary of an agreement that provides Libyan soldiers with weapons to fight terrorists, Republicans say the agreement hasn't made any difference in stymying terrorist activity.

"These terrorist groups take advantage of the chaos securing their own territory and using Libya as a launching pad for smuggling and terror attacks to Libya and its neighboring countries," said Ilena Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) at a House Foreign Affairs hearing Wednesday.

Jonathan Winer, special envoy for Libya at the State Department, said that the newly-formed government for Libya has been a strong partner in combating ISIS.

"Before this agreement, ISLE was expanding its presence in Libya, capturing 90 miles of prime Mediterranean coastline in Sirte," he said. "A year later, the picture looks very different - the bravery of the government to align Libyan soldiers has ISLE only controlling a few blocks in Sirte."

Winer said that the administration's policy is centered on promoting the ability of Libyans political freedom.

"After 42 years of Gaddafi's eradicated rule and five years after the country cast off its shackles, Libya has made not a lot, but some progress," he said.

Muammar Gaddafi, former leader of Libya, was killed by National Transitional Council forces during the Battle of Sirte in 2011, which refers to the battle that started in the spring of 2016, in the region of Sirte, Libya, between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and the forces of the Government of National Accord (GNA) backed by United States of America.

Ros-Lehtinen said that the intervention doesn't only bring terror to Libya, but also to the nation. She didn't understand how the intervention fit U.S. national security interest.

“When the administration announced its intervention, we expressed our concerns with its lack of clearly articulated objectives and how it benefited our country,” she said.

Richard Betts, adjunct senior fellow for national security studies at Columbia University, said Libya has become the main transit point for migrants trying to reach Europe.

“With the little or no border security or governance, there are concerns of potential terrorists reaching our shores,” he said.