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## **EXCERPT ON LIBYA AND SYRIA IN DEMOCRATIC PARTY DEBATE, 04-14-16**

BLITZER: -- the issue of national security and foreign policy.

Secretary Clinton, President Obama says the worst mistake in office that he made over these past seven and a half years was not preparing for Libya after Moammar Qadafi was removed. You were his secretary of State.

Aren't you also responsible for that?

CLINTON: Well, let me say I think we did a great deal to help the Libyan people after Qadafi's demise. And here's what we did.

We helped them hold two successful elections, something that is not easy, which they did very well because they had a pent up desire to try to chart their own future after 42 years of dictatorship.

I was very proud of that.

We got rid of the chemical weapons stockpile that Qadafi had, getting it out of Libya, getting it away from militias or terrorist groups.

We also worked to help them set up their government. We sent a lot of American experts there. We offered to help them secure their borders, to train a new military.

They, at the end, when it came to security issues, Wolf, did not want troops from any other country, not just us, European or other countries, in Libya.

And so we were caught in a very difficult position. They could not provide security on their own, which we could see and we told them that, but they didn't want to have others helping to provide that security.

And the result has been a clash between different parts of the country, terrorists taking up some locations in the country.

And we can't walk away from that. We need to be working with European and Arab partners...

BLITZER: Thank you.

CLINTON: -- with the United Nations in order to continue to try to support them.

The Libyan people deserve a chance at democracy and self- government. And I, as president, will keep trying to give that to them

BLITZER: Senator, go ahead.

SANDERS: According to "The New York Times"..

(APPLAUSE)

SANDERS: -- for President Obama, this was a pretty tough call, like a 51-49 call, do you overthrow Qadafi, who, of course, was a horrific dictator?

"The New York Times" told us it was Secretary Clinton who led the effect for that regime change. And this is the same type of mentality that supported the war in Iraq.

(APPLAUSE)

SANDERS: Look...

(APPLAUSE)

SANDERS: -- Qadafi, Saddam Hussein are brutal, brutal murdering thugs. No debate about that.

But what we have got to do and what the president was saying is we didn't think thoroughly about what happens the day after you get rid of these dictators.

Regime change often has unintended consequences in Iraq and in Libya right now, where ISIS has a very dangerous foothold. And I think if you studied the whole history of...

BLITZER: Yes.

SANDERS: -- American involvement in regime change, you see that quite often.

BLITZER: Secretary, we're going to let you respond.

(APPLAUSE)

CLINTON: Yes, well, I...

(APPLAUSE)

CLINTON: -- I...

(APPLAUSE)

CLINTON: -- I -- I would just point out that there was a vote in the Senate as to whether or not the United States should support the efforts by the Libyan people to protect themselves against the threats, the genocidal threats coming from Gadhafi, and whether we should go to the United Nations to seek Security Council support.

Senator sanders voted for that, and that's exactly what we did.

SANDERS: No.

(CROSSTALK)

CLINTON: We went to the United Nations -- yes, he did. We went to the United Nations Security Council. We got support from the Security Council. And we then supported the efforts of our European and Arab allies and partners.

This was a request made to our government by the Europeans and by the Arabs because of their great fear of what chaos in Syria would do to them. And if you want to know what chaos does, not just to the people inside but the people on the borders, look at Syria.

Nobody stood up to Assad and removed him, and we have had a far greater disaster in Syria than we are currently dealing with right now in Libya.

(APPLAUSE)

(CROSSTALK)

BLITZER: Senator, go ahead.

SANDERS: Secretary Clinton made this charge in previous debates and just repeating it doesn't make it truer. What you are talking about is what I think was what they call the unanimous consent, you know what that is, where basically, do we support Libya moving to democracy?

Well, you know what, I surely have always supported Libya moving to democracy. But please do not confuse that with your active effort for regime change without contemplating what happened the day after. Totally different issue.

CLINTON: Well, that isn't...

SANDERS: Second of all -- second of all, if I might, in terms of Syria, in terms of Syria...

BLITZER: Senator, let her respond to that, then we'll get to that.

Go ahead, Secretary.

CLINTON: There was also in that a reference to the Security Council, and I know you're not shy when you oppose something, Senator. So, yes, it was unanimous. That's exactly right, including you.

And what we did was to try to provide support for our European and Arab allies and partners. The decision was the president's. Did I do the due diligence? Did I talk to everybody I could talk

to? Did I visit every capital and then report back to the president? Yes, I did. That's what a secretary of state does.

But at the end of the day, those are the decisions that are made by the president to in any way use American military power. And the president made that decision. And, yes, we did try without success because of the Libyans' obstruction to our efforts, but we did try and we will continue to try to help the Libyan people.

BLITZER: Thank you, Secretary.

Go ahead, Senator.

SANDERS: If you listen, you know -- two points. Number one, yes, 100-0 in the Senate voted for democracy in Libya and I would vote for that again. But that is very different from getting actively involved to overthrow and bring about regime change without fully understanding what the consequence of that regime change would be.

Second of all, I know you keep referring to Barack Obama all night here, but you in Syria, you in Syria talked about a no-fly zone, which the president certainly does not support, nor do I support because, A, it will cost an enormous sum of money, second of all, it runs the risk of getting us sucked into perpetual warfare in that region.

Thirdly, when we talk about Syria right now, no debate, like Gadhafi, like Saddam Hussein, Assad is another brutal murdering dictator, but right now our fight is to destroy ISIS first, and to get rid of Assad second.

CLINTON: Well, I think Senator Sanders has just reinforced my point. Yes, when I was secretary of state I did urge, along with the Department of Defense and the CIA that we seek out, vet, and train, and arm Syrian opposition figures so that they could defend themselves against Assad.

The president said no. Now, that's how it works. People who work for the president make recommendations and then the president makes the decision. So I think it's only fair to look at where we are in Syria today.

And, yes, I do still support a no-fly zone because I think we need to put in safe havens for those poor Syrians who are fleeing both Assad and ISIS and have some place that they can be safe.