

Aaron Keck Reporting

CAIRO - Congressman David Price of Chapel Hill is overseas this week, meeting with representatives of emerging democracies in northern Africa as the co-chair of the U.S. House Democracy Partnership.

"There is still a lot of work to do to build working, functioning democracies," he says, "so we're here to show our support for the Arab Spring (and) the democracy-building effort, and see what assistance we might be."

Price and his fellow co-chair, Republican David Dreier, visited Libya and Egypt in the last few days to gauge the process of the democratic transition after last year's Arab Spring—and to offer whatever assistance the U.S. can give.

Speaking to WCHL's Aaron Keck from Cairo yesterday, Price said he'd met with Egyptian elected officials and presidential candidates, as well as leaders of the country's ruling military. He says he's still hopeful for democracy in Egypt, but the process is moving slowly.

"There's a history of repression and conflict," he says. "It's a very complicated society, and the task of giving all the factions, all the groups, all the communities representation in a parliament where they will feel that it's legitimate and where they'll have their say--that's a tall order."

But while Egyptian democracy remains a work in progress, Price says things are looking much better in Libya, in spite of the burden of four decades of dictatorship.

"It has a good deal of oil wealth and it has natural beauty and natural resources--it's just been horribly misgoverned," he says. "But we called on the leader of the Transitional Council there, and also the prime minister, who happens to be a Ph.D. from NC State..."

"We had good discussions and we're very impressed...and we're very optimistic about Libya."

Price, Dreier and the rest of the U.S. delegation will move on to Eastern Europe later this week, where they'll meet with leaders from emerging democracies in Macedonia and Kosovo.