



Military Operations in Libya

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On 17 March 2011 the UN Security Council adopted [resolution 1973](#) (2011), under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which authorised the use of force, including enforcement of a no-fly zone, enforcement of a UN arms embargo against Libya and to protect civilians and civilian areas targeted by the Qaddafi regime and its supporters.

The weekend of 19/20 March saw French, British and US military action begin under Operation *Odyssey Dawn*. By the end of March command of that operation had been gradually transitioned to NATO. On 23 March NATO assumed command of operations to enforce the UN arms embargo. The transfer of command responsibility for the no-fly zone was agreed on 24 March; while the decision to transfer command and control for all military operations in Libya was taken on 27 March. NATO formally assumed command under Operation *Unified Protector* at 0600 hours on 31 March 2011.

Military operations have been ongoing for seven months. During that time there have been criticisms of stalemate in the military campaign, allegations over burden sharing among NATO Member States, and questions over the existence of a viable exit strategy.

Following the fall of Sirte and the death of Colonel Gaddafi, Libya's transitional government declared liberation on 23 October 2011. The NATO Secretary General also confirmed in a statement that a preliminary decision had been taken to end Operation *Unified Protector* on 31 October 2011. However, he also went on to state that NATO would monitor the situation and retain the capacity to respond to threats to civilians if necessary.

This note does not examine political developments in Libya, including the recognition of the National Transitional Council and the search for a political solution in the country, or the creation of a UN Support Mission in Libya under UN Security Council Resolution 2009 (2011).

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1 Legal Basis and Parameters of Action

On 17 March 2011 the UN Security Council adopted [resolution 1973](#) (2011), under Chapter VII of the UN Charter which authorised the use of force, including enforcement of a no-fly zone and to protect civilians and civilian areas targeted by the Qaddafi regime and its supporters.

With respect to military action that resolution specifically:

- Called for an immediate ceasefire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians (paragraph 1).
- Authorised Member States, acting nationally or through regional organisations or arrangements, to take **all necessary measures** to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack, including in Benghazi (paragraph 4).
- The resolution specifically **excluded** the establishment of a foreign occupation force of any form in any part of Libyan territory (paragraph 4).
- Called for Members States of the League of Arab States to cooperate in the implementation of the measures outlined in paragraph 4 (paragraph 5).
- Authorised the establishment of a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace (paragraph 6). That flight ban would not, however, apply to flights that have as their sole purpose, humanitarian aid, the evacuation of foreign nationals, flights authorised for enforcing the ban or “other purposes deemed necessary for the benefit of the Libyan people” (paragraph 7).
- Paragraph 8 authorised Member States to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights imposed under paragraph 6.
- Called on all Member States to provide assistance, including any necessary over flight approvals, for the purpose of implementing paragraphs 4, 6, 7 and 8.

That resolution was adopted by a vote of 10-0, with five abstentions: Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia.

Detail of the other provisions in that Resolution, and the debate over its adoption within the Security Council, is examined in greater detail in Library briefing, SN/IA/5911, [The Security Council’s No-Fly Zone Resolution on Libya](#).

The arms embargo on Libya was originally adopted in [UN Security Council Resolution 1970](#) (February 2011) and redefined in UNSCR 1973.

For a discussion on the legal interpretation of UNSCR 1973 see Library briefing SN/IA/5916, [Interpretation of Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya](#).

1.1 Attorney General’s Advice

On 21 March 2011 the British Government also published a summary of the Attorney General’s legal advice in relation to the deployment of UK forces and military assets to Libya. That summary stated:

Following the prime minister’s statement to the House on March 18th, this note sets out the government’s view on the legal basis for the deployment of UK forces and military assets to Libya.

Under the Charter of the United Nations the Security Council is the organ conferred with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In carrying out its duties the Security Council acts on behalf of Member States of the United Nations, who agree to accept and carry out its decisions in accordance with the Charter. Among the specific powers granted to the Security Council are those provided

in Chapter VII of the Charter which is concerned with action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression.

Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) of 17 March 2011 is annexed to this document.

In this resolution the Security Council has determined that the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The Security Council has adopted the resolution as a measure to maintain or restore international peace and security under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which provides for such action by air, sea and land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Provision for a No Fly Zone is provided for by operative paragraphs 6 to 12 of the resolution. Operative paragraph 8 authorises Member States that have notified the UN Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, acting nationally or through regional organisations or arrangements to take all necessary measures to enforce the ban on flights established by operative paragraph 6.

Operative paragraph 4 of the resolution also authorises Member States making the notifications so provided, and acting in co-operation with the UN Secretary-General, to take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory.

Operative paragraph 13 of the resolution, in substituting a replacement operative paragraph 11 in resolution 1970 (2011), further authorises Member States to use all measures commensurate to the specific circumstances to carry out inspections aimed at the enforcement of the arms embargo established by that earlier resolution.

The Attorney General has been consulted and Her Majesty's Government is satisfied that this Chapter VII authorisation to use all necessary measures provides a clear and unequivocal legal basis for deployment of UK forces and military assets to achieve the resolution's objectives.¹

In response to calls for an updated summary of the legal advice to be published in light of an attack on a command and control centre at the end of April which killed members of Colonel Qaddafi's family, the Foreign Secretary stated:

Of course, the Government will consider requests made in the House in respect of the legal advice. We published very clearly a note on the legal advice at the time of the 21 March debate. However, again, I do not think that it would be right for Governments to start to publish legal advice on a regular basis every few days, but we will consider any requests that are made.²

2 Initial Implementation of UNSCR 1973

The Prime Minister suggested in the House of Commons on 18 March 2011 that enforcing the resolution if Colonel Qaddafi failed to comply and agree to an immediate ceasefire would be an international operation. While refusing to be drawn on which Member states could participate or provide military assets, he did suggest that any operations could be led by the US, France, and the UK, with the support of Arab nations. Given the abstention of Germany

¹ Politics.co.uk: [Legal Advice on Libya Mission](#)

² HC Deb 3 May 2011, c437-8

in the UN Security Council vote and the opposition of Turkey to military intervention, it was initially uncertain whether NATO would play a formal role.

A meeting was held in Paris on 19 March 2011 to discuss military options and participation. It was attended by European and North American ministers, representatives of the EU, UN and Arab League, and ministers from Iraq, UAE, Jordan and Morocco. Saudi, Kuwaiti, Omani and Bahraini ministers did not attend.

2.1 Early Military Action - Operation Odyssey Dawn

The weekend of 19/20 March saw French, British and US military action begin under Operation *Odyssey Dawn*. The goal of these initial operations was to “prevent further attacks by regime forces on Libyan citizens and opposition groups, especially in and around Benghazi; and second to degrade the regime’s capability to resist the no-fly zone [being] implemented under the United Nations resolution”.³

A US Department of Defense spokesman described the US approach to operations:

Our mission now is to shape the battle space in such a way that our partners can take the lead in execution.⁴

Action to establish a no-fly zone started quickly, with about 20 French fighter jets going on the first sorties over Libya,⁵ with the first priority being to weaken the Qaddafi regime’s air defences. To this end, 124 Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched against integrated air defence targets in the first few days, largely from American destroyers and submarines, but also one British Trafalgar-class submarine deployed in the Mediterranean.⁶

Some 24 coalition ships initially made up the joint naval task force, including vessels from Italy, US, Canada, UK, and France. The British ships HMS *Westminster* and HMS *Cumberland* formed part of the task force. The US provided command and control and logistics, and launched electronic attacks on Libyan defence systems. On 20 March, France announced that its aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* was leaving the port of Toulon and heading for the waters off Libya;⁷ while the Pentagon confirmed that Spain, Belgium, Denmark and Qatar had also joined the coalition.

After the deployment of Tomahawk missiles against air defence targets, the coalition turned to air-launched cruise missiles targeted on Libyan command and control facilities. The RAF deployed Storm Shadow cruise missiles from Tornado GR4s, flying from RAF Marham in Norfolk. The Tornados were refuelled in flight by VC10 and Tristar air-to-air tankers, E3D Sentry and Sentinel surveillance aircraft were also deployed. The MOD confirmed that RAF Typhoons were standing by, having been deployed from RAF Leuchars and RAF Coningsby, to an airbase at Gioia del Colle in southern Italy.

Attacks were also launched against military facilities and aircraft from an airfield at Ghardabiya, near Misrata and on Libyan government ground forces. A column of tanks and other forces that had been heading for the rebel stronghold of Benghazi was destroyed by

³ US Department of Defense Briefing by Vice Adm. Gortney on Operation Odyssey Dawn, 19 March 2011

⁴ US Department of Defense, “Mullen: Attacks Make No-Fly Zone Possible”, Press release, 20 March 2011

⁵ French Ministère de la Defense, “Libye : appareillage du porte-avions Charles de Gaulle”, Press release, 20 March 2011

⁶ US Department of Defense Briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney from the Pentagon on Libya Operation Odyssey Dawn, 20 March 2011

⁷ French Ministère de la Defense, “Libye : appareillage du porte-avions Charles de Gaulle”, Press release, 20 March 2011

French aircraft. Other attacks, such as on a building in Colonel Qaddafi's compound in Tripoli, said to be a military command centre, were reported. Despite the claimed success of actions to degrade Libyan air defence capabilities, heavy anti-aircraft fire continued to be reported in Tripoli.

The Pentagon confirmed on 20 March that the no-fly zone had effectively been put in place, which would be extended over a wider geographical area as operations progressed.⁸ On the night of 21/22 March, RAF Typhoons performed their first ever combat mission when they went into action patrolling the no-fly zone.

In a Pentagon press briefing on 24 March officials confirmed that strikes had continued to be launched against Libyan command and control and air defence assets and ground forces along the coastline and near the cities of Tripoli, Misrata and Ajdabiya. A further 14 Tomahawk cruise missiles were also launched against targets ashore, including an air defence site near Sebha in the south and a scud missile garrison near Tripoli. Of all combat missions being flown in support of the no-fly zone, 75% were being executed, at that time, by coalition partner nations.⁹ On the night of 24/25 March, British Tornado GR4s attacked Libyan armoured vehicles that were "threatening the civilian population of Ajdabiya." The aircraft launched a number of Brimstone guided missiles, which the MoD described as "high precision, low collateral damage".¹⁰

The Pentagon confirmed that Norway had joined the coalition on 24 March; while the United Arab Emirates confirmed that it would provide 12 fast jets to the operation: six F-16s and six Mirages, on 25 March.¹¹

A Pentagon situation update for **28 March** provided the following information on coalition sortie rates:¹²

	Partner Total	U.S. Total	Last 24 Hours
Sorties	619	983	178
Strike Sorties	365	370	107
TLAM	7	192	6

⁸ US Department of Defense Briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney from the Pentagon on Libya Operation Odyssey Dawn, 20 March 2011

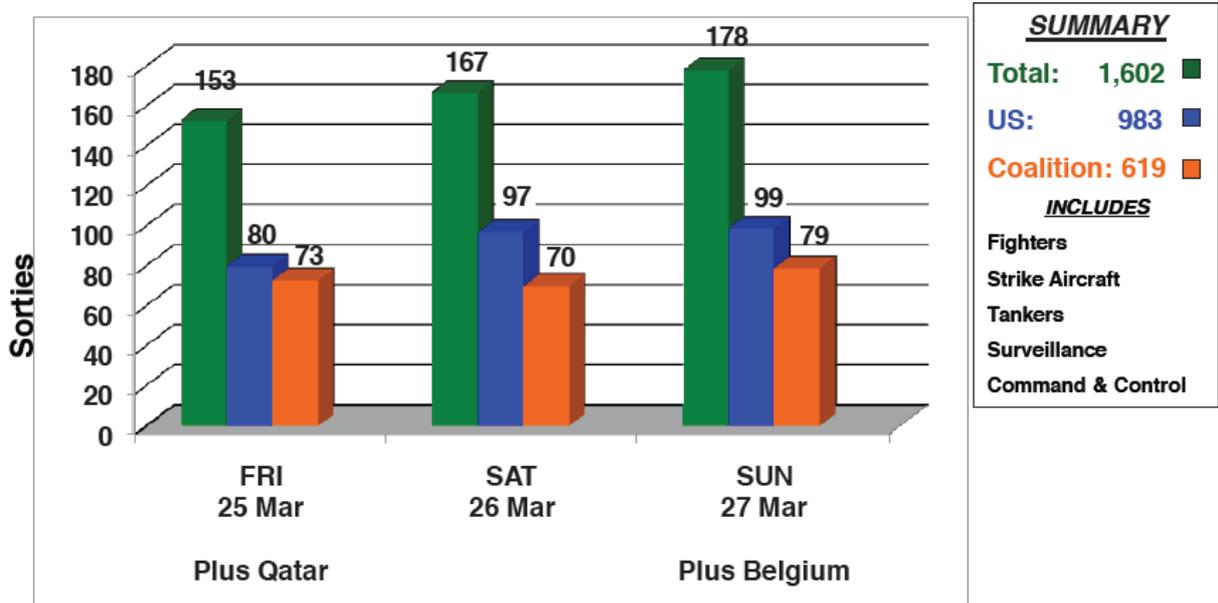
⁹ US Department of Defense News briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney from the Pentagon on Libya Operation Odyssey Dawn, 24 March 2011

¹⁰ Ministry of Defence, "RAF Tornados attack Libyan armoured vehicles", Press release, 25 March 2011

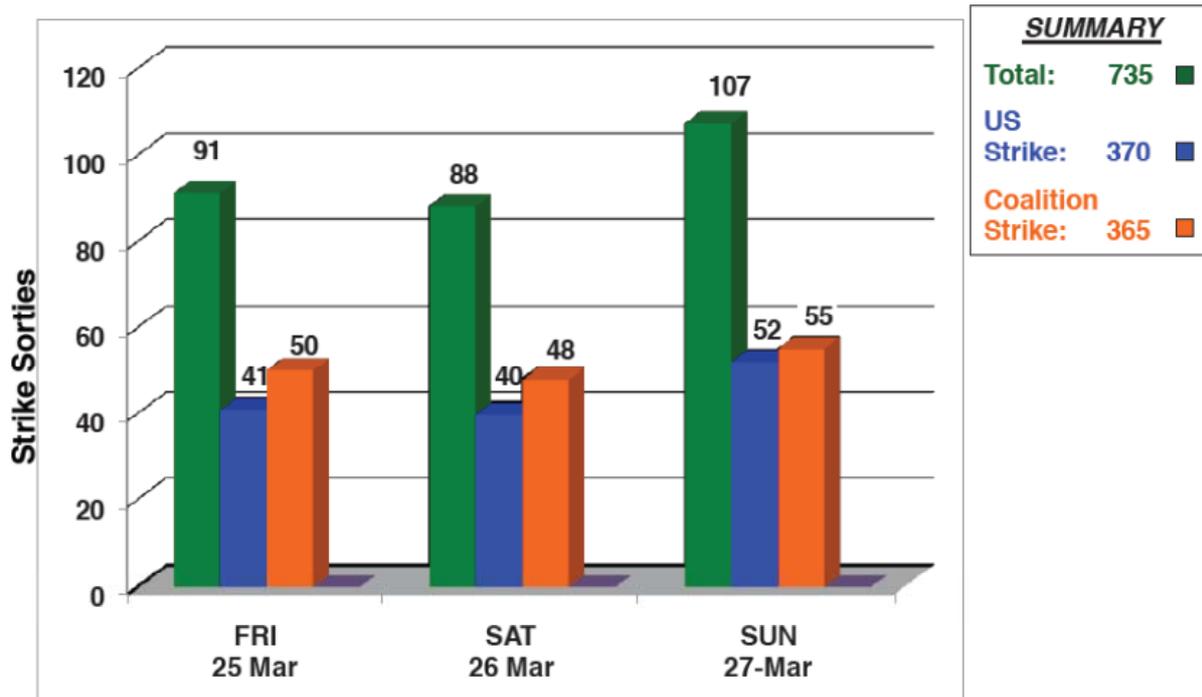
¹¹ HC Deb 28 March c33

¹² <http://www.defense.gov/news/d20110328slides1.pdf> and <http://www.defense.gov/news/d20110325slides.pdf>

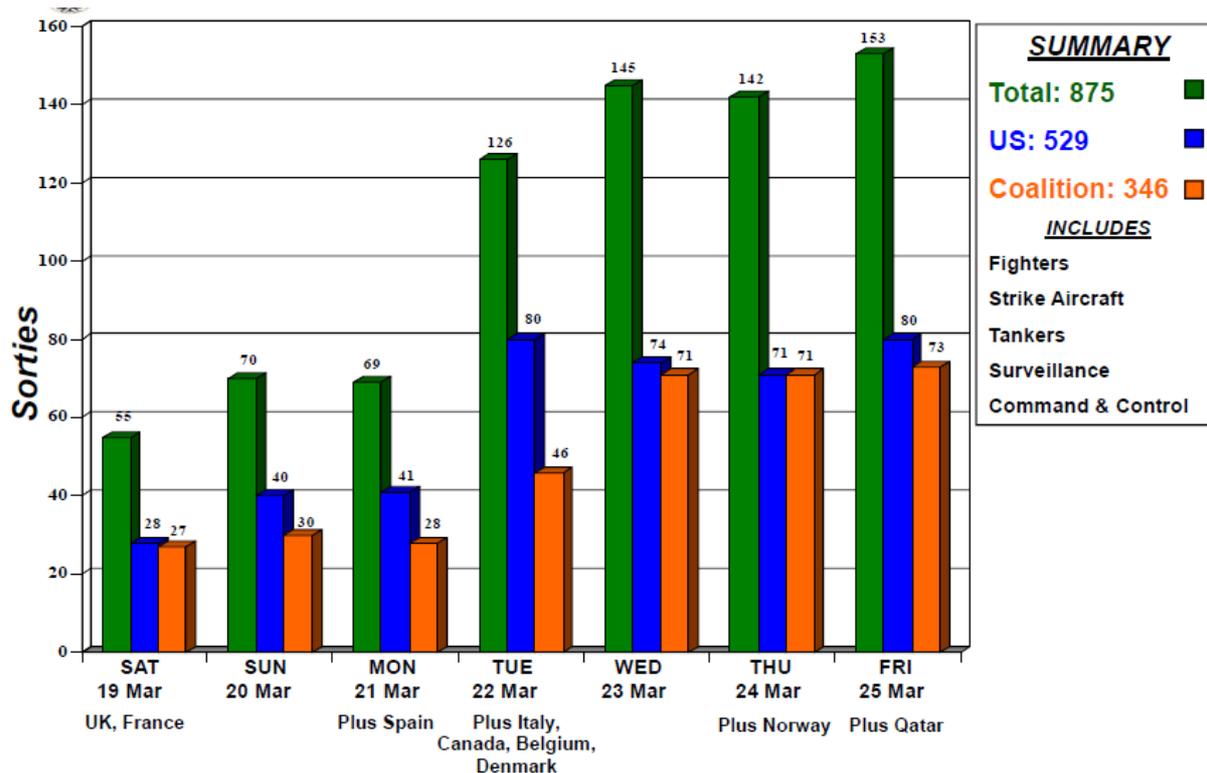
Breakdown of air operation sorties up to 28 March:



Breakdown of strike sorties up to 28 March:



Sortie rates in the first few days of military action were as follows:



Although the sortie rate between the US and coalition partner nation became more equitable over the period of operations, the Pentagon acknowledged that the US continued to provide nearly 80% of all air refuelling, almost 75% of aerial surveillance and 100% of all electronic warfare missions.¹³ In addition to the launch of Tomahawk land-attack missiles (TLAM), the Pentagon also revealed that by 28 March a further 600 precision guided munitions had also been expended (455 from the US and 147 from the coalition).¹⁴

In the accompanying press briefing Pentagon officials also stated:

Gadhafi has virtually no air defense left to him and a diminishing ability to command and sustain his forces on the ground. His air force cannot fly, his warships are staying in port, his ammunition stores are being destroyed, communication towers are being toppled, and his command bunkers are being rendered useless.¹⁵

They went on to state however that “they still have tactical, mobile surface-to-air missiles, which are still a threat”.¹⁶

Giving evidence to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 31 March 2011, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen suggested that Libyan military capability had been degraded by as much as 25% as a result of Coalition operation thus far; although he did go on to admit that Libyan forces still outnumbered the rebels by 10-1.¹⁷

¹³ US Department of Defense News briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney from the pentagon on Libya Operation Odyssey Dawn, 28 March 2011

¹⁴ ibid

¹⁵ US Department of Defense, Briefing by Vice Adm. Gortney on Operation Odyssey Dawn, 25 March 2011

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ “US shouldn’t arm Libyan rebels”, *Navy Times*, 31 March 2011

2.2 Enforcement of the UN Arms Embargo

In addition to the implementation of a no-fly zone and the protection of Libyan civilians, a core military task, initially defined by UNSCR 1970, and reiterated in UNSCR 1973, was the enforcement of the UN arms embargo against Libya. NATO had already announced on 9 March its intention to enhance its surveillance operation in the Central Mediterranean by increasing the operation of NATO AWACS aircraft, deployed in support of NATO's counter-terrorist operation *Active Endeavour*, to 24 hours a day. The following day NATO Defence Ministers also confirmed that it would increase the presence of NATO maritime assets in the region using ships from NATO's Standing Maritime Group and Standing Mine Countermeasures Group, in order to improve situational awareness and contribute to surveillance monitoring, including with regard to enforcing the UN arms embargo on Libya.

Following the adoption of UNSCR 1973, the US initially assumed command of the maritime embargo operation as part of Operation *Odyssey Dawn*. Command responsibility was subsequently transferred to NATO Joint Forces Command Naples (under Operation *Unified Protector*) on 23 March 2011.

2.3 Initial Command and Control

Initial coalition operations were conducted under the operational command of Gen Carter F Ham, Commander of US Africa Command. The tactical joint task force established to conduct operations was led by Admiral Samuel J Locklear aboard USS *Mount Whitney*, deployed in the Mediterranean.

At the outset a US Department of Defense spokesman said that the US would be handing over control shortly: "We anticipate the eventual transition of leadership to a coalition commander in the coming days."¹⁸ However, it was not clear in the early stages of the operation whether NATO, or another individual country, would take over control of the operation from the US.

Continued Turkish and German doubts about the military intervention, and French reluctance to hand control to NATO command, complicated the discussions. The French and German representatives were reported to have walked out after criticism of their countries' positions from the NATO Secretary General. France was said to be concerned that NATO leadership would reduce support in the Muslim world for the operation, given the organisation's association with the Afghanistan campaign. It was agreed that NATO would nevertheless supply logistical, intelligence and other support.¹⁹

Negotiations on command and control continued during the week of 21 March, with the US government anxious to hand over control of military operations. As outlined above, NATO Member States agreed that the Alliance would assume command of maritime operations to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya, on 23 March 2011.

NATO leaders also agreed to the transition of command responsibility for enforcing the Libyan no-fly zone on 24 March while any ground attacks, for the time being, would continue to be a coalition responsibility under the command of the US.²⁰ The compromise was reportedly reached to allay Turkish concerns within NATO about the possibility of ground

¹⁸ US Department of Defense, Briefing by Vice Adm. Gortney on Operation Odyssey Dawn, 19 March 2011

¹⁹ "NATO set to decide whether to join coalition military action against Libya", AP, 20 March 2011

²⁰ NATO, "[NATO Secretary General's statement on Libya no-fly zone](#)", Press conference, 24 March 2011

attacks causing civilian casualties. NATO subsequently assumed command of the no-fly zone on 25 March as part of *Operation Unified Protector*.

Despite the opposition of some of NATO's Member States, following further discussions NATO leaders agreed on 27 March 2011 that the Alliance would assume command responsibility for all military operations in support of UNSCR 1973. In a Statement to the House on 28 March the Prime Minister stated:

NATO is already co-ordinating the arms embargo, the maritime operation and the no-fly zone. Now it will take on command and control of all military operations, including those to protect the civilian population. Canadian Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard has been appointed as the NATO commander of the joint taskforce for the operation.²¹

An MoD spokesman earlier explained the command and control of the British part of *Operation Odyssey Dawn*:

AFRICOM is the supported combatant command, and the UK has liaison officers and staff embedded at every level. This includes having staff based on the US command ship USS Mount Whitney in the Mediterranean sea, where the US Joint Task Force Commander is located.

The UK's deployed assets and personnel fall under the operational command of the Chief of Joint Operations, Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, who commands the Permanent Joint Headquarters, in Northwood.

On the air side, the UK's Joint Force Air Component Headquarters is controlling the UK's contribution to the air operation in conjunction with the coalition. Air Vice-Marshal Greg Bagwell is the UK's Joint Force Air Component Commander; he is based with his staff at Ramstein with AFRICOM's Air Component HQ.

On the maritime side, Rear Admiral Ian Corder, Commander Operations, is controlling the UK's contribution to maritime operations in conjunction with the coalition. He is based at Northwood.²²

3 NATO Command – Operation *Unified Protector*

NATO formally assumed sole command of all military operations in the Libyan area of operations at 0600 hours on 31 March 2011. *Operation Unified Protector* is commanded by Allied Joint Force Command Naples and falls under the overall purview of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Admiral Stavridis (see appendix two for command and control flow chart). *Unified Protector* evolved to contain three main military objectives:

- **To enforce the UN arms embargo** – Nineteen NATO warships from 9 NATO countries were initially operating in international waters in support of the operation,²³ although that number has subsequently decreased to 12 vessels as operations have proceeded. Their main task is to monitor ships and aircraft heading towards Libyan territory and have the right to stop and search any vessel suspected of carrying

²¹ HC Deb 28 March c33

²² Ministry of Defence, "Libya update", Press release, 20 March 2011

²³ Belgium, Canada, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the UK. Bulgaria also deployed a frigate to participate in operations to enforce the arms embargo on 27 April. That vessel was scheduled to remain in theatre until the beginning of June.

prohibited cargo. As a last resort the Task Force is empowered to use force. Patrol aircraft and fighter jets are also deployed in the area of operations to provide long-range surveillance and intercept any flights suspected of carrying weapons into Libya. NATO vessels will not enter Libyan territorial waters. If weapons or mercenaries are found, the vessel and its crew will be escorted to a secure port where international and national authorities will take charge. Suspected aircraft will be intercepted and escorted to an airport designated by NATO. The Alliance is working closely with the International Maritime Organisation to ensure that the flow of legitimate commercial and private shipping to Libya continues unimpeded.²⁴

- **To enforce the no-fly zone** - As part of the operation naval vessels and surveillance aircraft provide real-time monitoring and coordination of air activity over Libyan airspace. They are also responsible for detecting any aircraft that enters the no-fly zone without prior authorisation. NATO fighter aircraft are available to intercept any aircraft which violates the no-fly zone and engage with it, if it presents a threat. NATO has made clear that in enforcing the zone, force will only be used as a last resort. NATO fighters also have the right of self defence against attacks from the air or ground.²⁵
- **To protect civilians and civilian centres** – NATO conducts reconnaissance, surveillance and information gathering operations to identify those forces which present a threat to civilians and civilian-populated areas. Acting on this information, NATO air and naval forces can engage targets either on the ground or in the air. Targets are determined by NATO's operational Commanders and to date, targets struck include tanks, armoured personnel carriers, air-defence systems, storage facilities, command and control centres and artillery around and approaching key civilian areas.

NATO allies originally agreed to conduct operations for a period of 90 days. Both the US and NATO also made it clear at the outset that providing direct close air support to the Libyan rebels was not part of the coalition's mandate and that NATO had no intention of establishing an occupying force in Libya.²⁶

The North Atlantic Council, meeting alongside its coalition partners, provides executive political direction to NATO operations. In a briefing to the media on 31 March, Admiral Giampaolo di Paola, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, stated:

NATO's mission includes not only armed forces of NATO countries but also contributions from partners. We consider regional support as fundamental, in line with the principles and core tasks highlighted in NATO's new Strategic Concept [...]

I want to be clear. The focus of our mission is to protect the civilian population. We know that this is a challenging endeavour and the situation on the ground is complex. We are also aware that there is no purely military solution to the crisis.

²⁴ [Operation Unified Protector: NATO arms embargo against Libya Fact Sheet](#)

²⁵ [Operation Unified Protector: NATO no-fly zone over Libya Fact Sheet](#)

²⁶ See US Department of Defense News briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney from the Pentagon on Libya Operation Odyssey Dawn, 28 March 2011; "NATO will not arm Libyan opposition, Rasmussen says", *Trend News Agency*, 31 March 2011; and *NATO and Libya: Key Facts and Figures* available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_71641.htm

NATO is not engaged in Libya to decide the future of the Libyan people. That is up to Libyans themselves. We are helping enforce the will of the International Community to protect them from attacks so that they can start shaping and deciding their future...²⁷

On the issue of decision making within the Alliance on the launching of attacks against the Libyan regime, a senior official in the US administration also stated during a press conference that:

NATO has agreed to take on the mission of protecting civilians and that mission will be executed in the – by the commanders, in the best way they judge possible [...]

And we – all 28 allies, every single one, agreed that that should be the case. And if it is judged by the commanders that there's a need to bomb forces of the Libyan regime, then the forces of the Libyan regime will be bombed, and no one is going to be able or in a position to challenge that. That is a military judgement to be made by the military authorities, and we, as an alliance, agreed today to give the supreme allied commander of Europe that authority.²⁸

In response to questions over the targeting of individuals of the Libyan regime, the Foreign Secretary stated in the House on 3 May 2011:

We want Gaddafi to go, and virtually the whole world wants him to go – let us be in no doubt about that – but the incident to which the hon. gentleman refers was an attack on a command and control location. NATO has increased the number of air strikes against the command and control functions of the Libyan regime, which in our view is wholly legitimate within the implementation of resolution 1973, and such attacks will continue [...]

Whether individuals are targeted depends, of course, on how they behave, and whether they are part of command and control centres, and on where they are at the time. I do not think it right to provide a running commentary on targeting, and nor is it militarily sensible to do so.²⁹

With respect to Colonel Qaddafi specifically, then US Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, also stated:

We are not targeting him specifically, but we do consider command and control targets legitimate targets wherever we find them.³⁰

Between the assumption of NATO command on 31 March and the end of 23 October 2011:

- A total of 26,281 air sorties, including 9,646 strike sorties, had been conducted.³¹ Air sorties initially averaged around 145-150 per day although that number has decreased as operations have progressed. Sortie rates have tailed off significantly in the last two months from around 130 per day at the beginning of August to 50-60 on average by mid-October. Strike sorties have totalled between 40 and 65 per day, although that number has also decreased significantly from an average of 30 per day in August to less than 15 per day by mid-October.

²⁷ NATO Press Briefing, 31 March 2011

²⁸ US Department of State, *Background briefing on the North Atlantic Council's meeting on Libya*, 27 March 2011

²⁹ HC Deb 3 May 2011, c437-8

³⁰ http://www.defencemanagement.com/news_story.asp?id=16163

³¹ While strike sorties are intended to identify and engage appropriate targets, munitions are not necessarily expended each time.

- A total of 3120 vessels have been hailed by NATO Task Force vessels implementing the arms embargo. 296 vessels have been boarded and 11 diversions have taken place.³²

An archive of daily activities by NATO military assets, including a summary of key targets and engagements, is available at: [NATO and Libya: Operational Media Update Archive](#).

The NATO area of operation is depicted in Appendix One.

4 Summary of Military Assets Deployed

4.1 Operation Odyssey Dawn

The following countries committed military assets to Operation *Odyssey Dawn* and the initial enforcement of the UN arms embargo:

- **United States** - Amphibious ships USS *Ponce* and USS *Kearsarge*; Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS *Stout* and USS *Barry*; submarines USS *Providence*, USS *Scranton* and USS *Florida*,³³ F-15 and F-16 fast jet aircraft; Global Hawk UAV; Joint Surveillance Target Attack radar System; AWACS aircraft; EA-18 Growler tactical jammer; P-3 maritime patrol aircraft and A-10 and AC-130 aircraft. Three B-2 stealth bombers were also reported to have flown missions in Libya from their base in the US.
- **UK (Operation *Ellamy*)** – Frigates HMS *Cumberland*, HMS *Westminster* (including a detachment of Royal Marines); the Trafalgar-class submarine HMS *Triumph*; ISTAR assets including the Nimrod R1,³⁴ Sentry E3-D AWACS aircraft, and Sentinel Airborne stand-off radar aircraft; Tristar and VC10 transport/tanker aircraft; Tornado GR4 and Typhoon aircraft.³⁵ Following suggestions that there are a shortage of RAF pilots for the Libya mission the MOD issued a statement outlining:

No trained front line pilots are being made redundant and we have enough aircraft and people to carry out all the operational tasks placed on us. There is no shortage of pilots and we are able to cover the Falkland Islands, UK air defence, Afghanistan, training requirements and operations in Libya with sufficiently trained Typhoon and Tornado pilots.³⁶

- **Canada (Operation *Mobile*)** – Frigate HMCS *Charlottetown*, six CF-18 fighter aircraft, air-to-air refuelling aircraft and maritime patrol aircraft.³⁷

³² NATO, *Operational Media Update*, 22 August 2011

³³ The USS *Enterprise* carrier strike group was also deployed in the Gulf of Aden in support of maritime security operations and Operation *Enduring Freedom*. Many analysts had suggested that it could be re-positioned to the Mediterranean if necessary.

³⁴ On 14 March the Secretary of State confirmed that the military had been tasked with assessing whether there could be a temporary extension in service of the Nimrod R1 signals intelligence aircraft, which is due out of service in 2011.

³⁵ Further information on Operation *Ellamy* is available at: <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/DefenceNews/InDepth/LibyaOperationEllamy.htm>

³⁶ Ministry of Defence, *Defence in the Media*, 29 March 2011

³⁷ Further information on Operation *Mobile* is available at: <http://www.comfec-cefcom.forces.gc.ca/pa-ap/ops/mobile/index-eng.asp>

- **France (Operation *Harmattan*)** – carrier strike group led by aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* with 26 aircraft aboard (16 fast jets); two destroyers *Forbin* and *Jean Bart*; approximately 20 Rafale and Mirage fast jet aircraft, six C-135 tanker aircraft and an AWACS aircraft.³⁸
- **Italy** – aircraft carrier *Giuseppe Garibaldi* with combat aircraft aboard; eight fast jet aircraft; one frigate, and offshore patrol vessel and a logistical support ship.
- **Norway** – Six F-16 fast jet aircraft.
- **Denmark** – Six F-16 fast jet aircraft and one transport aircraft.
- **Qatar** – Four Mirage fast jet aircraft and two C-17 transport aircraft.
- **Spain** – Four F-18 fast jet aircraft; refuelling and surveillance aircraft; one submarine and one frigate.
- **Netherlands** – six F-16 fast jets, one minesweeper and refuelling aircraft.
- **Greece** – one frigate, a search and rescue helicopter and one surveillance aircraft.
- **United Arab Emirates** – 12 fast jet aircraft and one C-17 transport aircraft.
- **Belgium** – Six F-16 aircraft and one navy minesweeper.

Turkey also deployed a number of warships in support of the UN arms embargo but ruled out taking part in combat operations.

Bases in the south of France, Greece, seven in southern Italy and the island of Sicily, and the French and Italian aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean have been the main bases for coalition aircraft. The principal base for the RAF is at Gioia del Colle, in the Puglia region of southern Italy. British support assets such as the E3-D Sentry, VC10 and Sentinel aircraft have also been based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and Trapani in Sicily. During the initial phase of the campaign, Tornados were also flying out of RAF Marham in Norfolk

4.2 Operation *Unified Protector*

As a result of the transition of command the number of US assets in the area of operation has fallen. On 28 March the Pentagon confirmed that the submarine USS *Providence* had already left the theatre of operation. American forces have, however, continued to provide support following the transition of command. In particular the US has continued to provide enabling assets such as logistics, airlift and tanker support, electronic support aircraft, search and rescue, and ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capabilities.³⁹ Although US fast jet aircraft were not expected to participate in coalition airstrikes against Libyan targets after 4 April,⁴⁰ the Pentagon suggested that some interdiction strike capabilities would be retained in theatre should they be needed by the coalition.⁴¹

³⁸ More information is available at: <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/english/portail-defense>

³⁹ "Gates outlines US role as NATO takes Libya mission", *American Forces Press Service*, 31 March 2011

⁴⁰ US participation has been scheduled to end on 2 April but was extended for 48 hours following a request from NATO.

⁴¹ US Department of Defense, Briefing by Vice Adm. Gortney on Operation Odyssey Dawn, 24 March 2011

As of 31 March 2011 the following NATO nations were committing military assets to NATO-led **Operation Unified Protector**.⁴² It should be noted that not all assets were being used to launch attacks on Libyan ground forces.

Operation Contributing Nations (as of 31 March)

							
	Belgium	6	0		Netherlands	7	1
	Bulgaria	0	1		Norway	6	0
	Canada	11	1		Romania	0	1
	Denmark	4	0		Spain	6	2
	France	33	1		Turkey	7	6
	Greece	2	1		United Kingdom	17	2
	Italy	16	4		United States	90	1
Total						205	21

Note on numbers: Figures are calculated by the Force Flow tracking system at SHAPE HQ and count all assets under the Command and Control of the Operational Commander. Numbers of assets should be taken as indicative.

As outlined above, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates also deployed fighter jets and a small number of transport aircraft to help enforce the no-fly zone.

Sweden also joined the coalition after the Swedish parliament approved the deployment of up to eight fast jet Gripen aircraft, and a C-130 transport aircraft to help enforce the no-fly zone, on 1 April 2011. Those aircraft will not, however, take part in any strikes on Libyan ground forces. The first Swedish aircraft arrived in theatre on 2 April.

As of 5 April 2011, NATO provided the following information on contributing nations, albeit in slightly less detail:⁴³

⁴² NATO and Libya: Keys Facts and Figures, 31 March 2011

⁴³ Operation Unified Protector: Key Facts and Figures, 5 April 2011. As of 4 May this publication was no longer available on the NATO website.

Operation Contributing Nations (as of 5 April)

	Belgium		Qatar
	Bulgaria		Romania
	Canada		Spain
	Denmark		Sweden
	France		Turkey
	Greece		United Arab Emirates
	Italy		United Kingdom
	Netherlands		United States
	Norway		NATO AWACS

		
Total	195	18

On 4 April the Prime Minister announced the deployment of four additional Tornado GR4 aircraft for the Libya operation, taking the total number of British fighter aircraft in the operation to 22 (10 Typhoons and 12 Tornados).⁴⁴ The Navy's Response Force Task Group (Cougar 11) was also deployed to the Mediterranean at the beginning of April in order to shore up the UK contingent. Initially comprising the amphibious landing ship HMS Albion, frigate HMS Sutherland, RFA Cardigan Bay, RFA Fort Rosalie, and elements of 40 Commando Royal Marines, the group was completed by the deployment of the helicopter carrier HMS *Ocean*, and Type 42 destroyer HMS *Liverpool* which assumed the operational tasks of HMS *Cumberland* which returned to the UK on 18 April. The group had already been due to deploy to the Mediterranean and the Middle East on exercise at the beginning of May. The Government also announced that four of the UK's deployed Typhoons were to be re-rolled in a ground attack role, having been exclusively employed in the operation until that point in an air defence capacity.

Following a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers on 14-15 April 2011, the Alliance issued a statement reaffirming its commitment to military action in Libya in support of UNSCR 1973:

We will continue to adapt our military actions to achieve maximum effect in discharging our mandate to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas. To this end, we are committed to provide all necessary resources and maximum operational flexibility within our mandate. A high operational tempo against legitimate targets will be maintained and we will exert this pressure as long as necessary and until the following objectives are achieved:

All attacks and threats of attack against civilians and civilian-populated areas have ended;

The regime has verifiably withdrawn to bases all military forces, including snipers, mercenaries and other para-military forces, including from all populated areas they have forcibly entered, occupied or besieged throughout all of Libya, including Ajdabiyah, Brega, Jadu, al Jebel al Gharbiyah, Kikla, Misrata, Nalut, Raslanuf, Yefrin, Zawiyah, Zintan and Zuara;

⁴⁴ <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2011/04/62904-62904>

The regime must permit immediate, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all the people in Libya in need of assistance.

We remain committed to the full implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1970 and 1973. In carrying out our mission, we reaffirm our support to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. We reiterate our strong support for the development of a transparent political solution as the only way to bring an end to the crisis and build lasting peace in Libya and a better future for the Libyan people.⁴⁵

Amid criticisms that NATO should be doing more to protect civilians on the ground, some NATO nations, led by UK and France, called on the rest of the NATO Member States to fulfil the force generation requirements of this operation, specifically in relation to the provision of fighter aircraft for strike sorties. At the time only six of the Alliance's 28 Member States were providing aircraft for air strikes on Libyan ground forces. Calls were also made for the US to re-engage its fighter aircraft in ground strikes after they withdrew to a supporting role at the beginning of April.

On 15 April US President Barack Obama, French President Nicholas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron, issued a joint letter on the situation in Libya which backed continued military action. That letter also stated:

Our duty and our mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 1973 is to protect civilians, and we are doing that. It is not to remove Gaddafi by force. But it is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Gaddafi in power.⁴⁶

A number of commentators, including several British MPs, suggested that the article amounted to a call for regime change, and therefore represented a substantially different military operation than the one for which MPs voted in Parliament on 21 March. On that basis, calls for Parliament to be recalled from Easter recess were aired. Others rejected this argument, however, suggesting that the article did not represent a change in policy. Richard Ottaway, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, was reported to have told the BBC that the article by the three leaders "doesn't actually take things any further" and that "This is a humanitarian mission and it is protection of the civilian population which is top of the order book and, I think, has not altered. We should only be recalling Parliament if there is a change in policy".⁴⁷

On 19 April the British Government announced that a group of British military liaison officers would be deployed in an advisory capacity to the opposition stronghold of Benghazi, to supplement the British diplomatic team already based there. Those officers would provide training to the National Transitional Council on "how to improve their military organisational structures, communications and logistics, including how best to distribute humanitarian aid and deliver medical assistance". Those military personnel would not "be involved in training or arming the opposition's fighting forces. Nor would they be involved in the planning or execution of the NTC's military operations or in the provision of any other form of operational military advice." On that basis, the deployment of the military advisory team was not considered by the Government to contravene the terms of the UN Security Council resolution which expressly forbids the deployment of an occupation force in Libya.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ NATO, [Statement on Libya](#), 14 April 2011

⁴⁶ The full text of that article is available at: <http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/134765/20110415/libya-obama-uk-nato-cameron.htm>

⁴⁷ "Libya: recall parliament over mission, urges Tory MPs", *BBC News Online*, 15 April 2011

⁴⁸ FCO Press release: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=582334882>

That announcement was followed by a commitment from Italy and France to also send teams of military advisers to assist the National Transitional Council. The US also announced plans to provide \$25m of non-lethal equipment to the rebels, including radios, uniforms and medical supplies. Separately, and despite considerable domestic opposition, Italy also announced that eight Italian combat aircraft (four Tornados and four AV8 Harrier) would be deployed in a combat strike capacity; while an additional four Italian F-16 fighter aircraft were assigned to enforcing the no-fly zone. The US also confirmed the deployment of armed Predator unmanned air vehicles to assist with the air campaign.

In line with the debate over the targeting of members of the Libyan regime, several commentators argued that the deployment of military advisers represented a first step towards the deployment of soldiers on the ground, amounted to substantial mission creep and risked dragging Coalition allies into an open-ended conflict with no clear exit strategy. Shashank Joshi, writing for RUSI, commented "It is remarkable that, many weeks into Britain's third war in a Muslim country within a decade, there is no articulated strategy from London. Strategic, operational and tactical questions are being needlessly muddled, and there remains a disjunction between political aims (regime change) and military objectives (containment) [...] the repeated insistence that Qadhafi must leave...is a serious error. It places unnecessary and unhelpfully restrictive constraints on British strategy".⁴⁹ As Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, also noted:

The announcement that British and French military advisers are going to help is not going to alter the situation quickly. It will take months more – at a minimum – to properly train and equip them, and it will take a radical shift in rebel leadership to give them meaningful unity and discipline. In the interim, an enduring war of attrition will turn a minor humanitarian crisis into a major one...".⁵⁰

On 26 April by the Foreign Secretary gave an update to the House of Commons on the situation in Libya. In response to questions about regime change and mission creep, he stated:

The military mission is defined by the United Nations resolution, and what the Prime Minister said about that on 21 March absolutely stands. That has not changed, although it is the common assessment of all NATO and Arab League nations involved-there might be a difference of view in some African Union nations-that it is impossible to see a way of securing the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolution while Colonel Gaddafi remains. That is why it is quite right to reiterate, as we all do in this House, that Gaddafi should go. However, the military mission remains defined by the UN Security Council resolution, and there has been no change in the Government's approach to that [...]

I hope that I have made it clear in the House today-indeed, on all days-that there will be no ground invasion of Libya and that we are not planning to send troops in any large numbers into Libya. I have made clear the terms on which the military liaison advisory team has gone into Benghazi. I think that what people would worry about with mission creep is a ground invasion-a protracted ground battle involving British troops in Libya-and that is not on the cards. It has no part in our plans and it is not consistent with the UN resolutions, so I can reassure people about that and I hope that the hon. Lady will join me in doing so.⁵¹

⁴⁹ "British strategy in Libya", *RUSI Commentary*, April 2011

⁵⁰ "Mission creep set in in Libya", *Los Angeles Times*, 23 April 2011

⁵¹ HC Deb 26 April 2011, c40 and c51

He also refuted the notion that the situation in Libya had reached a stalemate.⁵²

It is important to remember that the military situation remains fluid and has not settled into a stalemate. Hon. Members will be aware of how much the situation in Misrata has changed over recent days. Fighting has gone backwards and forwards on the western borders of Libya, and although there is a fairly static situation on what might be called the eastern front, between Brega and Ajdabiya, it has not yet settled into what one would call a long-term stalemate.⁵³

On the possibility of arming the rebels in the longer term, Mr Hague went on to state:

The British Government have taken no decision to arm or equip the opposition forces with lethal equipment. I have expressed our view of the legality of that before, which is that the arms embargo applies to the whole of Libya, but that it is legal under the UN resolution to supply equipment to protect civilian life in certain circumstances. Other nations may wish to do that or to interpret the resolution in a different way. We interpret it in that way and believe that the best way for us to help is to supply the non-lethal equipment that I have mentioned.⁵⁴

In a move that many regarded as an attempt to break the perceived military stalemate, the UK and France announced toward the end of May 2011 that both countries would deploy attack helicopters to Libya in an attempt to address the threat on the ground from pro-Qaddafi forces. The contingent of UK Apache attack helicopters are deployed aboard the carrier HMS *Ocean*, which deployed to the region in April as part of the Cougar 11 task force. Apache helicopters flew their first operational sorties on 3 June 2011.

In line with the earlier deployment of military advisory teams on the ground, the deployment of UK and French attack helicopters was also taken as evidence that the conflict was being escalated by NATO forces.⁵⁵

5 Developments Since June 2011

5.1 Extension of the Mandate for a Second 90-day Period

From the assumption of NATO command at the end of March 2011 allies agreed to conduct operations for an initial period of 90 days.

At the beginning of June NATO allies agreed to extend operations for a further 90 days from 27 June until the end of September 2011. Announcing the decision, the NATO Secretary General stated:

This decision sends a clear message to the Qadhafi regime: we are determined to continue our operation to protect the people of Libya. We will sustain our efforts to fulfil the United Nations mandate. We will keep up the pressure to see it through.⁵⁶

In doing so, allies and non-NATO contributors to the operation committed to “providing the necessary means and maximum operational flexibility within our mandate to sustain these

⁵² For a discussion of the stalemate that appears to be developing, see “[Stalemate in Libya: will advisers and drones tip the balance?](#)”, *RUSI Commentary* and “[British strategy in Libya](#)”, *RUSI Commentary*, April 2011

⁵³ HC Deb 26 April 2011, c40

⁵⁴ Ibid, c43

⁵⁵ See “Apache helicopters to be sent into Libya by Britain”, *The Guardian*, 23 May 2011

⁵⁶ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_74977.htm

efforts and welcome additional contributions to our common efforts".⁵⁷ However, criticisms were voiced once again by several NATO Member States over the willingness or ability of only a small number of countries to contribute assets to the campaign, in particular strike aircraft. To date, only eight of the 28 NATO allies have participated in strike sorties against Libyan forces: Norway, the UK, France, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Italy and the US. The US Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, commented during a Pentagon press conference on 9 June:

We affirmed the recent agreement to extend the NATO mission for another 90 days, as NATO strikes are becoming more and more effective at degrading the Qadhafi regime's military capability. Although we will keep up this operations tempo for as long as necessary, I did call for several alliance members to contribute military capabilities so that the burdens are more evenly shared and thus more easily sustained over time.⁵⁸

In further remarks to a conference on 10 June, Mr Gates highlighted the military shortcomings of the Alliance more generally that had been exposed by the Libya operation:

While the operation has exposed some shortcomings caused by underfunding, it has also shown the potential of NATO, with an operation where Europeans are taking the lead with American support. However, while every alliance member voted for the Libya mission, less than half have participated at all, and fewer than a third have been willing to participate in the strike mission. Frankly, many of those allies sitting on the sidelines do so not because they do not want to participate, but simply because they can't [...]

In the past, I've worried openly about NATO turning into a two-tiered alliance: between members who specialise in "soft" humanitarian, development, peacekeeping and talking tasks, and those conducting the "hard" combat missions. Between those willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of alliance commitments, and those who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership – be they security guarantees or headquarters billets – but don't want to share the risks and the costs. This is no longer a hypothetical worry. We are here today. And it is unacceptable.⁵⁹

Calls were also made for post conflict reconstruction planning to begin in earnest. Following a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers on 8 June 2011, the then Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox, commented:

As an international community, we need to start considering now what happens once hostilities end. It was right for NATO to take the responsibility of enforcing UNSCR 1973 and protect the Libyan population. The management of the aftermath – whenever and however this occurs – will be a complex issue for the whole international community to address.

NATO will have a part to play in the early stages of a post-conflict environment such as maintaining the no-fly zone and the arms embargo, as well as offering intelligence and surveillance assets to any monitoring arrangements.

The UN must lead the international response to post-conflict Libya. NATO needs to engage with the UN now, to underline the urgency of planning for the transition and the supporting role the Alliance can play...⁶⁰

⁵⁷ NATO, *Statement on Libya*, 8 June 2011

⁵⁸ Press conference with Secretary Gates from Brussels, 9 June 2011

⁵⁹

⁶⁰ MOD Press Release, 9 June 2011

Those remarks were also supported by Robert Gates during his conference speech.

Attention increasingly turned to post-conflict planning after rebel fighters entered Tripoli over the weekend of 20/21 August 2011, prompting speculation that the Qaddafi regime was on the verge of collapse. Political leaders remained cautious however. In a statement to the media on 22 August, the Prime Minister stated that “the situation in Tripoli is clearly very fluid today and there can be no complacency. Our task now is to do all we can to support the will of the Libyan people, which is for an effective transition to a free, democratic and inclusive Libya. This will be a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned process with broad international support co-ordinated by the UN”. He went on to confirm that “the wider NATO mission which is to protect civilians – that will continue for as long as it is needed”.⁶¹

Withdrawal/Deployment of Additional Assets

The extension of the operation for a further 90 days until the end of September 2011 offered participating nations the opportunity to assess their individual contributions to the Libya operation. While many nations retained their current levels of commitment, a number of NATO Member States announced what have been regarded as significant changes to their deployed forces.

- **Norway** – on 10 June the Norwegian government announced that its six F-16 fighter aircraft would be initially drawn down to four aircraft in late June and then withdrawn from the Libyan operation from 1 August. According to one report, citing Norwegian Ministry of Defence figures, Norwegian aircraft flew 596 sorties over the period of operations, which accounted for almost 10% of those flown by NATO aircraft.⁶² Ten Norwegian staff officers remain involved in NATO operations.
- **Italy** – At the beginning of July 2011 the Italian government announced that it would be withdrawing its aircraft carrier, the *Garibaldi*, and its deployed aircraft and personnel, from NATO operations in Libya in order to make cost savings after the government was forced to impose a number of austerity measures to deal with the financial crisis. The announcement came at the same time that the Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, also appeared to break rank with NATO allies and express doubts over the success of the mission, while suggesting that he had been opposed from the operation from the outset.⁶³

On 10 August France also withdrew its aircraft carrier, *Charles de Gaulle*, from Libyan operations in order for the vessel to undergo several weeks of maintenance. The French Ministry of Defense sought to reiterate, however, that French fighter aircraft would maintain their participation from NATO’s land bases, with carrier deployed aircraft being transferred to bases in Sicily in the near term. It was unclear, however, whether the *Charles de Gaulle* would return to Libyan operations following its period of maintenance.

Since the 90-day extension of operations in June, a number of allies also committed to extending their participation in Libyan operations. The Spanish Parliament agreed to an indefinite extension of Spain’s participation in the mission at the end of June 2011; while Sweden also agreed to a further 90-day deployment of its Gripen aircraft, although that contingent has been reduced from eight to five aircraft.⁶⁴ On 15 June the Canadian

⁶¹ Downing Street statement, 22 August 2011

⁶² “Norway withdraws F-16s from Libya ops”, *Defense News*, 11 August 2011

⁶³ “Italy breaks silence on Libya doubts”, *The Financial Times*, 8 July 2011

⁶⁴ “Sweden extends support to resolution 1973”, *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 29 June 2011

parliament also voted in support of extending Canada's mission by a further three and a half months. However, opposition parties have suggested that further requests for extensions of the operation beyond the end of September 2011 would not be supported as it would represent a move into "some very new phase of this conflict".⁶⁵

In July 2011 the UK also announced that a further four Tornado GR4 aircraft would deploy to the Gioia del Colle air base in Italy, primarily for deployment in the reconnaissance role. It had been acknowledged, however, that the aircraft would provide a useful secondary strike capability if required, particularly in light of the withdrawal of Norwegian fast jet aircraft.⁶⁶ By the summer, the number of UK fast jet aircraft deployed on Libya operations stood at 26 (16 Tornado GR4 deployed in either the ground attack or reconnaissance role and 10 Typhoon, four of which have been re-roled for ground attack operations). The minesweeper HMS *Brocklesby* also returned from Libya operations in July, having been deployed in theatre since April 2011, largely in the waters directly off the port of Misrata. HMS *Bangor* assumed those duties. The MOD also confirmed that contingency plans were underway for the rotation of forces in September should that prove necessary. It had been suggested that HMS *Illustrious* could be deployed to replace HMS *Ocean*; while one of the new Type 45 destroyers could be tasked to replace HMS *Liverpool*.⁶⁷

However, the ability of the UK to sustain the current pace of operations in Libya into the autumn had been questioned by a number of high ranking military officials, which drew censure from the British Government. The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, was reported in early June as having suggested that any extension of the campaign beyond September would present "challenging decisions about priorities" and that the Navy would have to "rebalance" its commitments. He was also reported to have argued that the campaign in Libya would have been more effective without the cuts to the Navy set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review in October 2010, in particular the withdrawal of the carrier and Harrier fleet.⁶⁸ Commander in Chief Air Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Simon Bryant, was also reported to have briefed MPs that the RAF was "running hot" and that the RAF's ability to deal with unforeseen emergencies would be rapidly eroded if the Libyan campaign continued beyond September.⁶⁹

Indeed, the defence planning assumptions in the Strategic Defence and Security Review envisage the conduct of one enduring stabilisation operation of up to 6,500 personnel (such as Afghanistan), while at the same time as conducting one non-enduring complex intervention of up to 2,000 personnel. A non-enduring operation is considered to be one that last less than six months and doesn't require a rotation of forces.⁷⁰ At present the Libya operation could be considered a non-enduring operation, although an extension beyond September would, by the Government's own definitions, change the operation into an enduring one.

However, the comments by the military chiefs were met with criticism by the Prime Minister who responded during a Downing Street press conference "There are moments when I wake

⁶⁵ "Parliament agrees to extend Libya mission", *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 15 June 2011

⁶⁶ MOD press release, "Additional RAF Tornados for operations over Libya", 15 July 2011

⁶⁷ "UK looks to send 'Lusty' to Libya", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 July 2011

⁶⁸ See "Libya: UK Government faces challenging decisions", *BBC News Online*, 14 June 2011 and "Navy chief: Britain cannot keep up its role in Libya air war due to cuts", *The Daily Telegraph*, 13 June 2011

⁶⁹ "Future RAF missions under threat if Libyan intervention continues", *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 June 2011

⁷⁰ *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review*, Cm 7948, October 2010

up and read the newspapers and think: 'I tell you what, you do the fighting and I'll do the talking'". During Prime Ministers Questions on 22 June, Mr Cameron also went on to state:

Edward Miliband: Finally, let me say to the Prime Minister in all sincerity that when our military chiefs raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of our operations, surely, "You do the fighting, I'll do the talking" is not the right thing to say. In retrospect, was that not very crass and high-handed?

The Prime Minister: I have huge respect for the people who run our armed services. They do an incredibly good job. They are highly professional people and they are involved in the National Security Council. They were involved in drawing up the strategic defence review. The only point that I have tried to make in recent days is that when we are at war, as we are in both Afghanistan and Libya, it is extremely important, whether one is a political leader or a military leader, to think very carefully about what one is about to say.⁷¹

The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir David Richards, also sought to reiterate that the UK could sustain operations in Libya as long as it chose to do so.⁷²

5.2 Extension of Operations beyond September 2011

On 21 September 2011 the North Atlantic Council agreed to extend NATO's mission in Libya for a further 90 days. NATO issued a statement saying:

We are determined to continue our mission for as long as necessary, but ready to terminate the operation as soon as possible. While the technical rollover is for up to 90 days, the review will allow us to end our tasks at any time.⁷³

UK Assets

With the extension of operations in September the UK altered its deployed assets slightly. The MOD announced that its Typhoon jets and three attack helicopters would be withdrawn from theatre, leaving a remaining fast jet contingent of 16 Tornados and two attack helicopters.⁷⁴

In a statement on 21 October the Defence Secretary, Philip Hammond, suggested that the UK had flown over 3,000 sorties over Libya, more than 2,000 of which were strike sorties.⁷⁵ Of the total NATO sorties conducted (26,281 sorties and 9,646 strike sorties as of 23 October 2011) the UK's contribution totals approximately 11% of overall sorties and 20% of strike sorties.

For now the UK has the following assets deployed on Operation *Ellamy*:

- RAF Tornado aircraft based at Gioia del Colle in Italy
- RAF VC10 and TriStar air-to-air refuelling tankers based in Sicily and the UK
- RAF Sentry and Sentinel surveillance aircraft based in Sicily and Gioia del Colle. Sentinel aircraft were re-deployed from RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus to Italy on 18 October.

⁷¹ HC Deb 22 June 2011, c315-6

⁷² "See UK Libya operations are sustainable", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 22 June 2011 and "Libya mission to last as long as needed – forces chief", *BBC News Online*, 14 June 2011

⁷³ MOD press release, 22 September 2011

⁷⁴ MOD press release, 22 September 2011

⁷⁵ MOD press release, *Hammond – proud of Armed Forces' role in Libya*, 21 October 2011

- HMS *Ocean* (helicopter carrier), deployed with two Apache attack helicopters.
- HMS *York* (Type 42 destroyer) - deployed to the Mediterranean to replace HMS Liverpool on 18 October.
- HMS *Bangor* (Sandown Class minehunter)
- Fleet Air Arm Sea King helicopters (Airborne Surveillance and Area Control role)
- RAF air transport aircraft providing extensive logistic support to the deployed bases in Italy, Sicily and the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus.⁷⁶

Since operations began, the UK has contributed a total of 16 Royal Navy warships, submarines and RFA vessels to humanitarian, combat and embargo operations off Libya.⁷⁷

Death of Colonel Gaddafi

Following the fall of Sirte and the death of Colonel Gaddafi on 20 October 2011, Libya's transitional government subsequently declared liberation on 23 October.

At a meeting of NATO's North Atlantic Council a preliminary decision was taken to end NATO operations over Libya on 31 October 2011. The NATO Secretary General issued a statement outlining:

Our NATO-led operation to protect the people of Libya, under the historic mandate of the United Nations, is very close to completion. We have taken a preliminary decision to end Operation Unified Protector on October 31, and we will take a formal decision in the next few days.

As we wind down the operation, together with our partners, we will monitor the situation and retain the capacity to respond to threats to civilians, if needed. So that the people of Libya can safely take their future fully into their own hands.⁷⁸

6 Cost of Military Operations in Libya

At the start of operations in March 2011 the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested that "the MOD's initial view is that they will be in the order of tens of millions of pounds, not hundreds of millions".⁷⁹

However, on 23 June the Ministry of Defence estimated of the costs of maintaining operations in Libya for a six month period to be £260m:

The current estimate of the net additional costs of military operations for six months in support of Operation ELLAMY - the United Kingdom's contribution to Coalition operations in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 - is in the region of £120 million. This excludes costs associated with capital munitions expended.

Based upon current consumption rates we estimate the cost of replenishing munitions may be up to £140 million.

⁷⁶ <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/LibyaOperationsUpdates.htm>

⁷⁷ MOD press release, *RFA Fort Rosalie finishes her Libya mission*, 3 October 2011

⁷⁸ NATO press release, 23 October 2011

⁷⁹ HC Deb 22 March 2011, c850

The Treasury has agreed to meet these costs from the Reserve.⁸⁰

In a further statement on 12 October, the MOD revised those figures as follows:

The revised figure for the whole operation, from Mid-March to mid-December is £160 million.

Our estimate of the cost of replenishing munitions used in Libya remains £140 million. As previously announced, the additional costs incurred by the Ministry of Defence on Operation Ellamy will be borne by the reserve, and will be in addition to the core defence budget.⁸¹

Further information is available in Library Standard Note SN03139, [The Cost of International Military Operations](#).

7 Libyan Military Assets

At the start of military operations a number of analysts suggested that the Libyan air force posed little risk to coalition forces enforcing a no-fly zone, consisting mainly of ageing Soviet-era MiG and Sukhoi fast jet aircraft, a small number of Mirage F1s and 35 attack helicopters. Many of those aircraft are thought to be non-operational or currently in store.⁸² Indeed, US Commander of the Joint Task Force, Admiral Locklear, suggested “when we began this, my estimation of his [Qaddafi’s] air force was not in – generally in good repair, compared to most – what you would consider most world standards for air forces. He had a lot of equipment that was aged. Much of it was sitting, parked on the runways and could not be used”. He went on to note, however, that “he was, however, effectively employing a tactical air force, a helicopter force, of – I would say on the order of several dozen rather than in large numbers”.⁸³

The main threat to Coalition air forces was thought to derive mainly from the vast quantities of surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and mobile anti-aircraft artillery currently in the Libyan military inventory that could be used to down allied aircraft flying below 15,000ft. The IISS *Military Balance 2011* estimates that the Libyan army possesses in excess of 420 SAM and in excess of 490 anti-aircraft artillery pieces.

The threat posed to the civilian population and opposition fighters in Libya by military forces loyal to Colonel Qaddafi was, however, somewhat different. The Libyan Army was thought to possess in excess of 2,421 artillery pieces, scud missiles,⁸⁴ mortars, multiple rocket launchers, over 1,000 armoured infantry fighting vehicles, armoured personnel carriers, reconnaissance vehicles and 800 main battle tanks.⁸⁵ Over the course of the conflict the campaign group, Human Rights Watch, also alleged that Libyan forces were using cluster munitions against civilian populations in Misrata.⁸⁶ Libyan naval forces were also sighted laying mines in the harbour of Misrata, in order to prevent humanitarian aid coming in;⁸⁷ while

⁸⁰ HC Deb 23 June 2011, c24WS

⁸¹ HC Deb 12 October 2011, c30WS

⁸² IISS, *Military Balance 2011*

⁸³ US Department of Defense News Briefing with Adm. Locklear, 22 March 2011

⁸⁴ Although the ability of the Libyan army to use them effectively has been questioned after pro-Qaddafi forces recently launched a scud missile which fell in the desert, several miles away from its intended target of Brega.

⁸⁵ International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance 2011*

⁸⁶ <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/04/15/libya-cluster-munitions-strike-misrata>

⁸⁷ See NATO press release, “NATO mine hunters sweep approaches to Misrata harbour”, 2 May 2011

it had been suggested that Qaddafi was also making extensive use of foreign mercenary and paramilitary forces.⁸⁸

A number of analysts also expressed concern over Libya's remaining chemical weapons stockpile. Under a WMD agreement reached with the US in 2003, Libya agreed to abandon its chemical weapons programme and accede to the *Chemical Weapons Convention*. In 2004 it declared its stockpile of chemical agents and facilities to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and embarked on a programme to destroy existing stockpiles. In 2010 the OPCW reported that Libya was moving towards full compliance with the Convention but noted that it had until May 2011 to get rid of any remaining assets. Since the onset of operations concerns have been expressed among US officials over the location of remaining assets, and the security of those stockpiles. Indeed, the then senior Libyan rebel commander, General Abdul Fatah Younis, formerly the Libyan interior minister before defecting to the opposition, claimed at the end of April that Colonel Qaddafi could be ready to use his stockpile of mustard gas "as he's in a desperate situation".⁸⁹ Other analysts have questioned the ability of Libyan forces to launch a chemical weapon attack, however, and suggested that Libya's residual stocks of mustard gas could be badly degraded and therefore unusable.⁹⁰

The security of chemical weapon stockpiles in the aftermath of the Qaddafi regime's collapse has also been raised. In a statement on 23 August the Chairman of the US House of Representatives Intelligence Committee stated:

Even after Qadhafi is out of power we will have to step up and lead to ensure U.S. national security interests are safeguarded. In particular, we must ensure that Qadhafi's stockpiles of advanced weapons, chemical weapons and explosives don't fall into the wrong hands.⁹¹

8 Suggested Reading

Library Material

- Library Standard Note SN06003, *In Brief: Arab Uprisings 2011*
- Library Standard Note SN/IA/5911, *The Security Council's No-Fly Zone Resolution on Libya*
- Library Standard Note, SN/IA/5908, *In brief: Parliamentary Approval for Deploying the Armed Forces*
- Library Standard Note SN/IA/5904, *No Fly Zone over Libya: Suggested Reading*
- Library Standard Note SN/IA/5916, *Interpretation of Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya*

Articles

- "Early military lessons from Libya", *Strategic Comments*, 30 September 2011

⁸⁸ "NATO strikes command and control facility in Tripoli", NATO press release, 1 May 2011

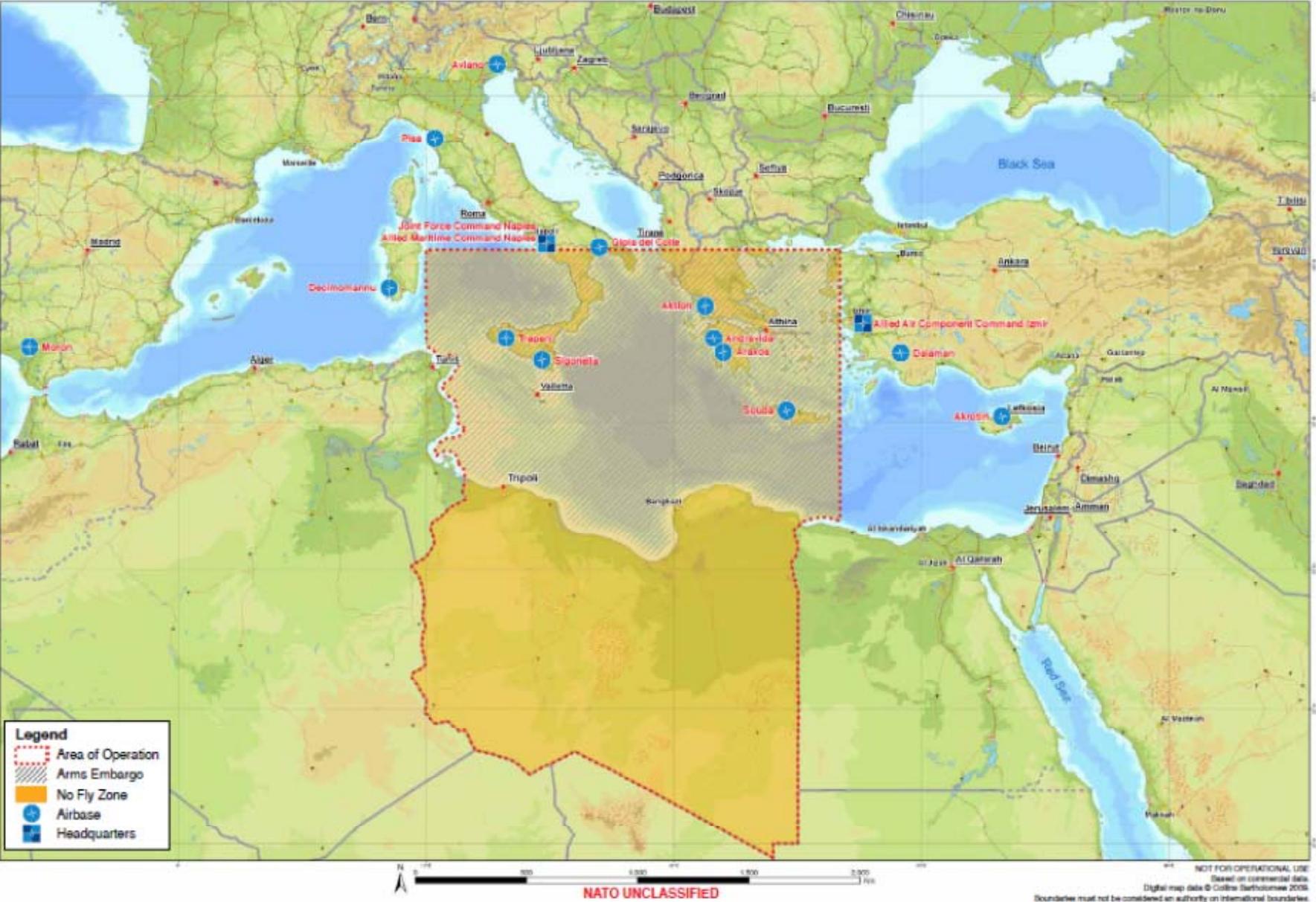
⁸⁹ "Gaddafi is ready to use mustard gas, say rebels", *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 April 2011

⁹⁰ "Questions remain on Libyan mustard agent stockpile", *Global Security Newswire*, 3 March 2011

⁹¹ http://gsn.nti.org/gsn/nw_20110823_8302.php

- [Accidental Heroes: Britain, France and the Libya Operation](#), RUSI, September 2011
- “Relief in alliance after flawed five-month mission”, *The Financial Times*, 23 August 2011

Appendix One – Operation *Unified Protector*: Area of Operation



Appendix Two – Command and Control of Operation *Unified Protector*

