



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 21, 2011

With UN Permission, U.S. Leads Missile Assault on Gaddafi Forces in Libya

With a no-fly zone in place following a 24-hour period of attacks from both air and sea, and Libyan forces observing an immediate cease-fire, according to a [Reuters](#) news report, Gaddafi's troops were stopped for the moment, but the dictator of 41 years promised "a long, drawn-out war" against both rebel and foreign forces he referred to as "traitors" and "Nazis."

"Initial operations have been very effective," Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during an appearance on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, March 20. "We've taken out most of his air defense systems and some of his airfields. But there is still a great deal to be done."



The coordinated assault came at the behest of the UN Security Council, which claimed it feared a slaughter of civilians and rebels who had been under nearly non-stop attack by Gaddafi's forces.

On March 18, President Obama used UN permission as his cue to move U.S. forces into action, stating that "in response to a call for action by the Libyan people and the Arab League, the U.N. Security Council passed a strong resolution that demands an end to the violence against citizens. It authorizes the use of force with an explicit commitment to pursue all necessary measures to stop the killing, to include the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Libya."

That authorization played out in an almost immediate implementation of the missile assault supposedly meant to protect the Libyan people. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking in Paris at a meeting of foreign ministers gathered to strategize before the attack, said that the coalition had "every reason to fear that, left unchecked, Gaddafi will commit unspeakable atrocities."

As reported by the [Washington Post](#), the assault came as U.S. and British warships launched scores of Tomahawk cruise missiles on Libyan air defenses while French fighter jets attacked military vehicles and troops on March 19. "More than 100 missiles slammed targets along Libya's western coast, destroying radars, transmitters, and anti-aircraft batteries to signal the start of 'Operation Odyssey Dawn,' a multinational military campaign intended to protect Libyan civilians and rebels forces," the Post reported.

The initial attack by 20 French fighter jets, which began to enforce a no-fly zone over Benghazi on Saturday (March 20), was quickly followed up by missile attacks from two dozen war ships and jet fighters, led by the U.S. The targeted sites were Gaddafi's air defenses around the cities of Tripoli, Misurata, and an area between Misurata and Benghazi, said Vice Admiral William Gortney, director of the Pentagon's Joint Chiefs of Staff. "The goals of these initial operations are ... to prevent further



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attacks by regime forces on Libyan citizens and opposition groups — especially in and around Benghazi — and second to degrade the regime’s ability to resist the no-fly zone we are implementing,” Gortney explained.

The *Post* noted that the U.S., “which has been reluctant to take the lead in the operation, was expected to quickly turn over control of the operation to its international partners after the opening salvos to destroy Libyan air defenses.” According to a senior U.S. military official, the *Post* reported, “Washington needed to take on a leadership role in the initial attacks because of U.S. forces’ ‘unique’ capabilities in terms of precision cruise missiles and its ability to use electronic warfare aircraft to destroy and degrade Libyan radar and communications.”

While overall support for the assault seemed to be strong both among European and Arab countries, following the first round of attacks “a vital Arab participant in the agreement expressed unhappiness with the way the strikes were unfolding,” reported the [New York Times](#). “The former chairman of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, told Egyptian state media that he was calling for an emergency league meeting to discuss the situation in the Arab world, and particularly Libya.”

Moussa said that the drama unfolding in Libya “differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone, and what we want is the protection of civilians and not the bombardment of more civilians, referring to claims by Gaddafi spokesmen that the allied missile attack had claimed the lives of dozens of civilians.

According to [CNN](#), that complaint sent the Obama Administration into an intense lobbying posture as it attempted to assure Arab leaders that the President had not over-stepped the authority the UN had granted him in his assault on their Middle East neighbor. “The senior officials described the Obama team’s phone calls as making clear to the Arab League that bombing Gaddafi’s air defenses falls within the Security Council resolution’s scope of imposing a no-fly zone and taking ‘all necessary measures’ to stop the dictator from attacking civilians in his own country,” reported CNN. “We don’t believe this goes beyond the resolution,” CNN quoted one White House official as saying.

But in submitting to the UN’s self-declared authority, Obama has shirked his sworn oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution, Congressman Justin Amash (R-Mich.) has pointed out. In fact, Amash noted that none other than Barak Obama himself, speaking as a U.S. Senator in 2007, emphasized the need for a President to get congressional authorization before committing the kind of U.S. military resources he has in his campaign against Gaddafi.

Wrote Thomas Eddlem in [The New American](#), “In a [Facebook](#) posting, Rep. Amash quoted then-presidential candidate Obama’s view on the constitutional power of the President to commit troops without prior approval from Congress. The Illinois senator told a [Boston Globe](#) interviewer on December 20, 2007: ‘The President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation.’”

According to Eddlem, Amash concluded that under Mr. Obama’s own reading of the Constitution, “the U.S. must halt all strikes against Libya. I call on congressional leadership to reconvene session so we can vote on whether to authorize military action.”

Photo of Tomahawk missile launch: AP Images

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