

In northwestern Minnesota, volunteers are taking time off from their jobs and from school to help fill sand bags and build temporary levees as we watch the Red River of the north rise to its eventual crest. The flood fight takes all hands on deck in North Dakota and Minnesota, with local, State, and Federal Government working together to protect these communities. Earlier this week, to help in this fight, Governor Dayton declared a state of emergency for 46 Minnesota counties. North Dakota has also been declared a state of emergency.

FEMA has said it will have all the resources it would need to maintain its capabilities during a shutdown. However, if the Federal Government closes its doors, FEMA will not be able to process in a timely manner paperwork and applications that Minnesotans will be submitting for assistance once the waters recede. I have been through these flood fights before. The whole community comes together. The whole community fights that flood. They take days and days and days. Some of them have lost their houses, and they are still out there helping their fellow citizens. I see that and I wonder to myself: And we in this body and in this Congress can't come together when we are this close, when there actually was agreement on a number last night. We can't come together while these volunteers across the Red River are coming together on a flood fight? That is absurd.

I urge my colleagues who are holding this up to reconsider their all-or-nothing stance so we can move forward with the real work that must be done. A setback now would simply prevent the growth needed to address our country's long-term fiscal imbalances.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to add 4 additional minutes to my 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LIBYA

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I am aware that most of my colleagues are taking the floor today to speak about the potential shutdown of the government, and very appropriately so. I am strongly opposed to a government shutdown, as we all are. I especially want to note its adverse effects on our men and women in uniform.

Of course, I have joined so many of my colleagues in cosponsoring the Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act of 2011. The last thing our men and women and their families need to worry about is how to make ends meet while they are taking up arms to defend the Nation's interests.

I rise to talk about the deteriorating situation in Libya which could have more profound effects than the crisis we are in. It is a very serious, very de-

teriorating situation and one which is fraught with severe implications for America's national security interests.

I remain a strong supporter of the President's decision to take military action in Libya. It averted what was an imminent slaughter in Benghazi and has given us a chance to achieve the goal of U.S. policy as stated correctly by the President: to force Qadhafi to leave power. I am also grateful we have capable friends, our Arab partners, and NATO allies, who are making critical contributions. But that is not a substitute for U.S. leadership. Right now that is the main missing ingredient in the coalition's efforts in Libya—the willingness of the administration to take decisive actions, together with our partners, so that we can accomplish our goal as quickly as possible rather than look to our allies to do it all themselves, which I fear the evidence is mounting they cannot do.

The administration has chosen to stop flying strike missions against Qadhafi's forces, even though they continue to threaten Libyan civilians and even though our NATO allies cannot match our unique capabilities in this regard. The administration correctly declared that forcing Qadhafi from power is a goal of U.S. policy, but our military mission is not working toward that goal by actively seeking to degrade Qadhafi's forces, thereby increasing the pressure on him to leave power.

At a time when Qadhafi's forces are adapting to NATO's tactics and capabilities and concealing themselves in populated civilian areas, the administration has grounded our most effective aircraft, the A-10 and the AC-130, which are the only planes—the only planes—that are capable of conducting the kinds of precise air-to-ground operations now required to protect civilians under the current circumstances. Not surprisingly, Qadhafi's forces are now regaining the momentum on the ground.

We cannot succeed with half-measures. Right now, our actions are not adding up to a strategy that appears capable of achieving our goals. To the contrary, we seem to be failing to prevent the situation on the ground in Libya from sliding into a stalemate.

Just yesterday, GEN Carter Hamm, the commander of U.S. Africa Command, who led Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya, told the Armed Services Committee that a stalemate in Libya, where Qadhafi remains in power to pose an even greater threat to the world and to the Libyan people, is not in America's interest or in anyone's interest. But in the same hearing yesterday, General Hamm also conceded that the situation on the ground in Libya is "more likely" of becoming a stalemate now than when this intervention began. I am afraid I agree with the general.

I would like to highlight some of the news my colleagues may have missed.

Yesterday, there was an airstrike that, unfortunately—the Washington

Post: "NATO's credibility takes a hit in Libya."

Forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi went back on the offensive . . . as questions continued to mount about the credibility and effectiveness of NATO's no-fly zone and campaign of airstrikes.

A senior U.S. general described the situation in Libya as a stalemate, while Turkey said it was talking to both sides working on a "road map" for a cease-fire. In the meantime, Gaddafi is seeking what military advantage he can get and probing for gaps in NATO's resolve. . . .

The day also ignited new confusion and outrage among rebels in Ajdabiya after warplanes strafed rebel forces and killed at least five people, including two doctors. Rebels first accused NATO of targeting them. . . . By Thursday night, it was still unclear who attacked. . . .

Abdul Fattah Younis, the rebel's commander, told reporters that if NATO had attacked their tanks, it was a mistake, and if Gaddafi's airplanes had been allowed to strike them, it was an "even bigger mistake."

Quoting the New York Times:

As for the current air war, NATO is especially sensitive to the criticism that came most scathingly from the leader of the Libyan opposition forces, Gen. Abdul Fattah Younes. He said in Benghazi late Tuesday that "NATO blesses us every now and then with a bombardment here and there, and is letting the people of Misurata die every day."

So we relieved a humanitarian—let's get this straight, my friends—we relieved a humanitarian disaster in Benghazi, and now, because of either ineptitude or lack of resolve or lack of capability or all of the above, we are now watching a massacre—certainly human suffering of enormous proportions in Misurata.

There is another article from the Guardian: "NATO lacking strike aircraft for Libya campaign."

There is a New York Times editorial today. Interestingly, the New York Times says:

There is a much better option: the American A-10 and AC-130 aircraft used earlier in the Libya fighting and still on standby status. President Obama should authorize these planes to fly again under NATO command. Unlike the highflying supersonic French and British jets now carrying the main burden of the air war, these American planes can fly slow enough and low enough to let them see and target Colonel Qaddafi's weapons without unduly endangering nearby populations.

Facts are stubborn things. The fact is that now the situation is deteriorating. The suffering goes on, and America and our allies appear to be showing that we are incapable or unwilling to address a third-rate military power, ruled by a man who has the blood of 190 Americans on his hands, who has been involved in terrorist activities throughout the world, who went outside of Benghazi and said: We will go house to house and kill every one of you. And the situation is deteriorating into stalemate.

So what do we need to do?

First, we need to get U.S. Armed Forces, especially our A-10s and AC-130s, back in the business of flying strike missions against Qadhafi's

forces—not just as part of our effort to protect civilians but to work toward the goal of our actual policy, which is to impose enough pressure on the regime to compel Qadhafi and his family to leave power.

Second, the United States should work with our friends and allies to help the opposition government in Benghazi, the Transitional National Council, to gain access to some of the tens of billions of dollars worth of funds that have been frozen from the Qadhafi regime.

Third, we need to help the opposition to Qadhafi communicate more effectively, while shutting down Qadhafi's ability to broadcast his propaganda. Qadhafi has cut off land lines, mobile networks, and the Internet. While top opposition leaders have satellite phones, we have both humanitarian and strategic interests in restoring the ability of people in liberated parts of Libya to communicate with each other and the rest of the world. We should take steps to get Qadhafi's satellite, television, and radio broadcasts off the air. U.S. diplomacy is urgently needed to get those countries that have satellite providers broadcasting Qadhafi's propaganda to drop those communications immediately.

Fourth, the United States should follow France, Qatar, and Italy in recognizing the opposition government, the Transitional National Council, as the sole legitimate government of Libya.

I hear again and again: We don't know who these people are. Well, I will tell you who they are. They are people who rose up against an oppressive and brutal dictator and wanted to assert their rights for freedom and democracy. That is who they are.

Any allegation that they are dominated by al-Qaida is patently false. We did not know who was going to come after Hitler, but we wanted him gone. So this continuous stream that somehow this is al-Qaida—it is not al-Qaida; it is people who want freedom and democracy. They rose up peacefully, as the Tunisians did and the Egyptians did and as others across the Middle East and north Africa are now doing for greater political freedom, economic opportunity, and justice. That is why this regional awakening, which some are calling the Arab spring, rather than helping al-Qaida, is, in fact, the greatest repudiation of al-Qaida the world has ever seen.

Fifth, we need to facilitate the provision of weapons to the Libyan opposition, as well as command and control technology, training, battlefield intelligence, and other capabilities that can strengthen their ability to increase the pressure on Qadhafi to leave power.

I want to reiterate that I do not support nor do I believe is necessary American ground troops under any circumstances. We should be able to, with a combination of the robust implementation of these five measures, drive Qadhafi from power and give the Libyan people their God-given rights.

I want to say again that I see on cable time after time that we do not know who these people are and they may be al-Qaida. I will tell you who they are. They are people who do not want to live under oppressive, repressive brutal regimes. And the more of a stalemate, the more likely al-Qaida forces will infiltrate and gain power. The quicker Qadhafi leaves power, the more likely it is we will see a dramatic transition.

We cannot say—we cannot say—we intervened in Libya to prevent a slaughter in Benghazi only to see one in Misurata or some other city. If we stay our present course, that is what will likely happen. We need decisive actions, not half-measures. We need to be leading. America must lead. NATO is America. We need to be leading in a strong and sustained way, not sitting on the side lines or playing a supporting role. We have the right goal in Libya. The President was right to intervene in the first place, but now we need to take the necessary steps to finish the job.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the articles I referred to be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 8, 2011]

NATO'S CREDIBILITY TAKES A HIT IN LIBYA
(By Leila Fadel and Simon Denyer)

AJDABIYA, LIBYA.—Forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi went back on the offensive Thursday, as questions continued to mount about the credibility and effectiveness of NATO's no-fly zone and campaign of airstrikes.

A senior U.S. general described the situation in Libya as a stalemate, while Turkey said it was talking to both sides and working on a "road map" for a cease-fire. In the meantime, Gaddafi is seeking what military advantage he can get and probing for gaps in NATO's resolve.

At the organization's headquarters in Brussels, NATO ambassadors held an unscheduled meeting Thursday to follow up on complaints from French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe that the Libya campaign risks getting bogged down unless the pace and efficiency of air support for rebel forces picks up.

The inability of either side to score a decisive victory has left the Obama administration and NATO in a quandary, facing decisions about whether to continue the mission of trying to protect civilians or to increase assistance to the opposition, aid that is currently limited to strikes from air and sea.

Attacks by Gaddafi's forces began with strikes on desert oil installations that serve as the rebels' economic lifeline, and they intensified Thursday with the fresh artillery bombardment of rebel positions in the eastern port of Ajdabiya, which sent many fighters fleeing.

The day also ignited new confusion and outrage among rebels in Ajdabiya after warplanes strafed rebel forces and killed at least five people, including two doctors. Rebels first accused NATO of targeting them but later said the attack probably came from Gaddafi's forces. By Thursday night, it was still unclear who attacked the rebels from the sky.

Abdul Fattah Younis, the rebels' commander, told reporters that if NATO had at-

tacked their tanks, it was a mistake, and if Gaddafi's airplanes had been allowed to strike them, it was an "even bigger mistake."

Either way, NATO's credibility among rebel forces, already battered since the United States took a back-seat role, appears to have sustained another blow. Rebels are questioning NATO's resolve to help them.

The government attacks on oil installations in the remote southern desert appeared intended to take advantage of the limits of NATO's involvement. Even as the rebels made their first oil shipment, a series of attacks on oil installations shut down production at the country's main oil field of Sarir. An oil company official in rebel-held territory joined the calls Thursday for better protection from NATO.

Rebel fighters in Ajdabiya have grown accustomed to the Western alliance controlling the skies, so they were taken off guard Thursday when low-flying planes fired upon several tanks and a passenger bus loaded with fighters. Younis, the rebel commander, denounced what he called "a vicious attack" and said that the precision of the strikes led him to believe that NATO was responsible.

Outraged rebel fighters called the attack a repeat of an incident last Friday in which NATO bombs mistakenly killed 13 rebels and injured seven others. That incident was triggered when the rebels fired their weapons into the air in celebration—an act that NATO forces mistook for hostile fire.

This time, Younis said, the rebel army had informed NATO of its plan to move tanks and other forces into new positions outside Ajdabiya. The tanks and bus were parked, other fighters said, and were marked with the green, black and red rebel flag.

Rebel forces, meanwhile, came under fire from government loyalists at Ajdabiya's western gate and rapidly retreated. Many fighters, and some of the few families who had not yet fled the city after weeks of fighting, drove north and east toward Benghazi, the rebel capital, their pickup trucks and cars filled with everything from mattresses to suitcases to automatic weapons.

The main hospital in Ajdabiya was evacuated, with its patients and staff also headed to Benghazi. But Gaddafi's forces appeared not to have entered the city proper, and some rebel fighters remained.

In Washington, Gen. Carter F. Ham, who commanded the coalition operation until it was taken over by NATO last week, responded affirmatively when asked during congressional testimony Thursday whether the conflict had reached a stalemate. He said that "debate is occurring within the U.S. government" about how best to respond.

In response to a question from Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Ham said he agreed that a stalemate seemed "more likely" than it had been when the United States and its allies began their military strikes last month.

The NATO meeting in Brussels was convened in response to complaints from France, which, along with Britain, has carried out the largest number of sorties over Libya since U.S. forces turned over operational command March 31.

NATO officials said bad weather had reduced visibility and not made it easy to supply the sustained, close air support demanded by rebel commanders. They also accused Gaddafi's forces of dispersing troops, tanks and artillery among civilian populations in several cities.

The alliance said it was investigating the initial rebel version of what happened near Ajdabiya, but it did not reveal whether coalition warplanes were in the area at the time.

The alliance said that fighting there had been "fierce" for several days and that the battlefield remains confused and disorganized.

"The situation is unclear and fluid, with mechanized weapons traveling in all directions," said a statement from NATO facilities in Naples.

With a quick military solution looking less likely by the day, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country was holding talks with both sides in Libya and working on a "road map" to achieve a ceasefire.

In any prolonged stalemate, the rebels' ability to shore up their region's tattered economy with oil revenue will be critical. Rebels have about 2 million barrels of crude oil in Tobruk that can be exported, but production at the Sarir and Misra fields has halted after a series of attacks.

Two employees of Arabian Gulf Oil Co. are still missing after Gaddafi forces attacked the Misra field with rockets, setting fire to at least one oil tank, a company spokesman, Abdeljalil Mayuf, told the Reuters news agency on Thursday.

Gaddafi's government has routinely denied attacking oil facilities and has blamed rebels or NATO for the attacks.

"If we get Gaddafi's forces out of these areas, we can try to reopen Sarir field, but it's not safe now," Mayuf said, appealing for air support from NATO.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 7, 2011]

CHANGING LIBYAN TACTICS POSE PROBLEMS FOR NATO

(By Steven Erlanger)

PARIS.—Angry charges by Libyan rebels that NATO has failed to come to their aid point up a question that has haunted the Western air campaign from the start: how to avoid a stalemate and defeat the Libyan leader without putting foreign troops on the ground.

NATO officials and the French foreign minister, Alain Juppé, rejected the opposition criticism on Wednesday, saying that bad weather and evolving tactics by forces loyal to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi were limiting the air war, which is supposed to be protecting Libyan civilians and driving the colonel's troops to retreat to their barracks. In recent days, Qaddafi forces have stepped up their shelling of Misurata, in the west, and pushed rebels back from some eastern oil towns.

The rebels, of course, are a largely untrained, disorganized fighting force. But the nature of the battle has also changed since a United Nations resolution authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians.

In the early stages of the air campaign, allied warplanes blistered Qaddafi tanks, artillery and transport trucks in the desert outside the rebel capital, Benghazi. But American intelligence reports from Libya say that the Qaddafi forces are now hiding their troops and weaponry among urban populations and traveling in pickup trucks and S.U.V.'s rather than military vehicles, making them extremely difficult targets.

"The military capabilities available to Qaddafi remain quite substantial," said a senior Pentagon official who watches Libya. "What this shows is that you cannot guarantee tipping the balance of ground operations only with bombs and missiles from the air."

NATO officials, who just took over responsibility for the air campaign from the United States, deny that their bureaucracy is somehow limiting the campaign. "No country is vetoing this target or that one; it's not like Kosovo," where in 1999 some countries objected to certain bombing targets, said a senior NATO official, asking anonymity in accordance with diplomatic practice.

"The military command is doing what it wants to do," he said.

NATO officials said on Wednesday that NATO was flying more missions every day, and that defending Misurata was a priority. Carmen Romero, a NATO spokeswoman, said that the alliance flew 137 missions on Monday and 186 on Tuesday, and planned 198 on Wednesday. "We have a clear mandate, and we will do everything to protect the citizens of Misurata."

A rebel spokesman in Misurata said Wednesday that NATO had delivered two airstrikes that pushed the Qaddafi forces away from the port, opening it for vital supply ships. "We have renewed momentum, and our friends are helping us big time," said Mohamed, a rebel spokesman whose name was withheld for the protection of his family.

"NATO is not the problem," the senior NATO official said. "The Qaddafi forces have learned and have adapted. They're using human shields, so it's difficult to attack them from the air." While many Western officials have accused the Qaddafi forces of using human shields, they have yet to produce explicit evidence. But they generally mean that the troops take shelter, with their armor, in civilian areas.

The harder question is how NATO will respond to the changed tactics of the Qaddafi forces, which now seem to have achieved a stalemate against the combination of Western air power and the ragtag opposition army.

First, there is a question of whether without the participation of the United States, the rest of the coalition—France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Norway, Qatar and a few others—have the right mix of weapons or enough of them. In particular, the United States uses a jet called the A-10, or Warthog—which flies lower and slower than other airplanes but has cannon that can destroy armored vehicles—as well as the AC-130, both of which are effective in more built-up areas. The Europeans have nothing similar.

The United States has had C.I.A. agents on the ground with the rebels in eastern Libya for some time, and there are unconfirmed reports that they may be helping to train the rebel army's raw recruits. Even so, forming a real army that can oust Colonel Qaddafi may take many months, and the coalition is unlikely to be that patient.

That is one reason that allied governments, including the United States and Britain, are urging defections from the Qaddafi circle and hoping that he will be removed from inside. No official, of course, is willing to talk about any covert mission to remove the colonel, except to say that "regime change" is not authorized by the United Nations.

And that is why Britain, Turkey and the United States are all exploring the possibilities of a negotiated solution to the conflict, provided Colonel Qaddafi and his sons relinquish power.

François Heisbourg, a military policy expert at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris, said, "Given where we are, any deal that removes Colonel Qaddafi from the scene is a deal we should take."

As for the current air war, NATO is especially sensitive to the criticism that came most scathingly from the leader of the Libyan opposition forces, Gen. Abdul Fattah Younes. He said in Benghazi late Tuesday that "NATO blesses us every now and then with a bombardment here and there, and is letting the people of Misurata die every day."

Mr. Juppé, whose country has been the most aggressive in defense of the Libyan opposition, said on Wednesday that the situation in Misurata was difficult, but it was complicated by the need to protect civilian lives.

"Misurata is in a situation that cannot carry on," Mr. Juppé told France Info radio. "But I want to make clear that we categorically asked that there is no collateral damage on the civilian population, so it makes the military interventions more difficult, because Qaddafi's troops understood it very well and are getting closer to the civilian population."

He said he would bring up the difficulties of Misurata to the NATO secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

Rebel leaders have rejected the idea that the Qaddafi forces in Misurata cannot be attacked from the air, saying that the neighborhoods where the troops are concentrated were long ago abandoned by civilians.

Another option is to increase the pressure on Colonel Qaddafi and his sons, although openly changing the objective in Libya from protecting civilians to ousting the Qaddafi family from power would probably shatter the international coalition that is enforcing the United Nations resolution, said Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"Nevertheless," he added, "the U.S. and its allies need to make hard—if somewhat covert—choices, and make them quickly," he said in an e-mailed commentary. "The last thing anyone needs at a time when there is near-turmoil from Pakistan to Morocco is a long-lasting open wound of political division and extended conflict in Libya as the worst-of-the-worst authoritarian leaders elsewhere in the region struggle to survive."

NATO needs to take the rebels' side more forcefully, he said, despite the neutrality of the United Nations resolution. That could take several forms, he said, among them "killing Qaddafi forces the moment they move or concentrate, rather than waiting for them to attack; striking Qaddafi's military and security facilities; and finding excuses to strike his compound."

For Libya, Mr. Cordesman wrote, "a long political and economic crisis and an extended low-level conflict that devastates populated areas" would represent a "net humanitarian cost" that would be "higher than fully backing the rebels, with air power and covert arms and training."

[From the Guardian, Apr. 5, 2011]

NATO LACKING STRIKE AIRCRAFT FOR LIBYA CAMPAIGN

(By Ian Traynor and Richard Norton-Taylor)

Nato is running short of attack aircraft for its bombing campaign against Muammar Gaddafi only days after taking command of the Libyan mission from a coalition led by the US, France and Britain.

David Cameron has pledged four more British Tornado jets on top of eight already being used for the air strikes. But pressure is growing for other European countries, especially France, to offer more after the Americans withdrew their attack aircraft from the campaign on Monday.

"We will need more strike capability," a Nato official said.

Since the French launched the first raids on Libya 16 days ago, the coalition and Nato have destroyed around 30% of Gaddafi's military capacity, Lieutenant General Charles Bouchard, the Canadian officer leading the air campaign, told Nato ambassadors.

But attempts to "degrade" the Libyan leader's firepower further were being complicated by a shift in tactics by Gaddafi, said Brigadier General Marc van Uhm, a senior Nato military planner.

"They are using light vehicles and trucks to transport," while hiding tanks and heavy weapons, he said.

"We try to identify where those heavy assets are, because we have seen they have

chosen to hide themselves into urban areas to prevent being targeted, even using human shields.”

Nato officials insisted the pace of the air operations was being maintained. But it has emerged that the US and the French, who have been the two biggest military players until now, are retaining national control over substantial military forces in the Mediterranean and refusing to submit them to Nato authority.

The French have the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, two escorting frigates and 16 fighter aircraft, none of which are under the Nato command and control which was announced last Thursday.

Until last week, President Nicolas Sarkozy was the loudest opponent of handing over the operations to Nato control. Nonetheless, the French are not only taking part in the Nato campaign, but are the biggest non-US contributors, with 33 aircraft, double Britain's 17. Not all of these are strike aircraft.

Until Monday, the Americans had performed most of the attacks on ground targets, with the French executing around a quarter and the British around a 10th. Given the US retreat, Nato is seeking to fill the gap, but only the British have pledged more.

“We're very happy that one country decided to bring in more assets,” said Van Uhm.

When Nato took over from the coalition it was stressed that it had assumed “sole command and control” of all air operations.

However, countries are dipping in and out of Nato command, withdrawing “air assets” for national operations before returning them to alliance control.

“It's pretty clear that Nato is in command. Nato is in the lead,” said Van Uhm. “There are assets under national control in the area. But General Bouchard is commanding what Nato does . . . You could say nothing is happening without Nato knowing.”

The general stressed that no air strikes on ground targets in Libya had taken place outside Nato's command.

Six countries are believed to be engaged in the bombing campaign—France, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Belgium, and Norway—with many others involved in policing an arms embargo and enforcing a no-fly zone.

Gaddafi's air force had been grounded, Van Uhm said.

In London, the Ministry of Defence said RAF aircraft had struck targets in Libya on each of the past three days.

Tornado GR4 ground attack planes, flying from the Italian airbase of Gioia del Colle, hit a battle tank and two surface-to-air missile launchers near Sirte on Monday when they launched three anti-armour Brimstone missiles. The previous day, they dropped Paveway IV bombs and fired Brimstone missiles to target a group of 10 armoured vehicles south of Sirte.

On Saturday, they dropped Paveway IV bombs on two tanks in Sirte and also hit “several small ground attack aircraft” on an airfield near Misrata, the MoD said.

Two of the Eurofighter/Typhoons based in Italy have returned to the UK. The Typhoons are not equipped to conduct ground attack operations.

[From the New York Times, Apr. 8, 2011]

KEEPING AHEAD OF QADDAFI

Wars are messy business, and the international effort to keep Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's forces from slaughtering Libyan rebels and civilians is proving no exception. In recent days, the colonel has thwarted NATO airstrikes by regrouping his forces into densely populated areas. That has left NATO with a seemingly impossible choice: leave some of the regime's most deadly

weapons unmolested, or target them and risk possibly heavy civilian casualties.

There is a much better option: the American A-10 and AC-130 aircraft used earlier in the Libya fighting and still on standby status. President Obama should authorize these planes to fly again under NATO command. Unlike the highflying supersonic French and British jets now carrying the main burden of the air war, these American planes can fly slow enough and low enough to let them see and target Colonel Qaddafi's weapons without unduly endangering nearby populations.

Mr. Obama was right to insist that other participating nations should step up and that the operation be quickly transferred to non-American NATO command. United States forces are already overstretched—and bearing much of the burden in Iraq and Afghanistan—and Libya's uprising is unfolding on Europe's doorstep.

European commanders are fully capable of running the show, and European jet fighters can certainly destroy military targets on desert roads and sparsely populated areas. But no other country has aircraft comparable to America's A-10, which is known as the Warthog, designed to attack tanks and other armored vehicles, or to the AC-130 ground-attack gunship, which is ideally suited for carefully sorting out targets in populated areas.

In a war where rebel ground forces are struggling to train and organize themselves, and foreign ground forces are out of the question, these specialized American planes provide a unique and needed asset. Mr. Obama should make them available to NATO commanders now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I rise again today to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and on both sides of the Capitol to move beyond the unnecessary and distracting partisan bickering and come together to fund our government through the remainder of the current fiscal year, including our military, our early-childhood programs, and our essential health services for our seniors and children.

Six months into the 2011 fiscal year and less than 12 hours before a government shutdown would close off many of the important services to millions of Americans, Congress has yet to fulfill its most basic responsibility and pass a budget.

I know the people of North Carolina or any State did not send us to Washington to point fingers or blame other people for the challenges our country faces. They sent us here to work with our colleagues on commonsense solutions. During my time as budget co-chair in the North Carolina State Senate, I learned two things: First, it is never easy to craft a budget, there are always tough choices to make; and second, our fiscal challenges can only be met if Republicans and Democrats have that commitment to work together.

Despite the impression the American people may have based on what they have seen in recent weeks, I know we can work this out. We have to work together because after we come to an agreement on this year's budget, we

must buckle down and chart out a comprehensive bipartisan path to rein in our nearly \$14 trillion national debt.

I believe we all share the common goal of reducing this year's deficit, but the national debt will not disappear with one bill or in 1 year alone. It will take a comprehensive and long-term approach that moves beyond a singular focus on domestic discretionary spending.

That is why I remain concerned by some of the cuts passed by the House and especially by the dozens of divisive policy riders that are disrupting our ability to chart a pragmatic and responsible fiscal course for our country.

It is why I remain concerned that we are holding up government funding with threats to take away vital health care to millions of American women who could not otherwise afford it. These health services include Pap tests, breast cancer screenings, birth control, and STD testing and treatment. These services, which are funded through title X, were signed into law by President Nixon and supported by George H.W. Bush. According to independent, nonpartisan studies, every \$1 spent on these family planning services saves \$4. Is that not what we are supposed to be working on—reducing the amount of our government spending?

These proposals are the only things standing between a reasonable, bipartisan compromise and an irresponsible government shutdown. If such a shutdown does occur, we risk delivering a crippling blow now to our already fragile economic recovery.

More than 1,000 American small business owners, who were already facing difficulties securing the borrowing they need to expand and add jobs, could see their SBA-backed loans delayed.

We have 368 national parks in our country. Millions of dollars will be lost to the businesses surrounding those parks if we shut down the government. In April of 2010 alone, in North Carolina, more than 1.3 million people visited the national parks and spent millions of dollars. These parks include the Great Smoky Mountains, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Cape Hatteras National Seashore and others. Tourism in North Carolina is one of our State's largest industries. In 2010, tourists spent \$17 billion across our State, and the tourism industry supports 185,000 jobs for North Carolinians. More than 40,000 businesses in North Carolina provide direct services to travelers. If we close our national parks, these small businesses are at risk of losing customers, losing money, which will make it much more difficult for my State to recover from this tough economy.

We risk putting even more pressure on our already shaky mortgage market by preventing thousands of homeowners from receiving a loan to buy a new house.

As for North Carolina, I am particularly alarmed about the impact a government shutdown would have on our courageous military personnel and