

The World Can't Wait protest when Stephen Hadley spoke in San Francisco on March 19, 2011 is mentioned by *The New York Times* in this article on Libya. Paragraphs are highlighted.

Target in Libya Is Clear: Intent Is Not

By Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger

From [The New York Times](#) | Original Article

WASHINGTON — All the deliberations over what military action to take against Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) of [Libya](#) have failed to answer the most fundamental question: Is it merely to protect the Libyan population from the government, or is it intended to fulfill [President Obama](#)'s objective declared two weeks ago that Colonel Qaddafi “must leave”?

“We are not going after Qaddafi,” Vice Adm. William E. Gortney said at the Pentagon on Sunday afternoon, even as reports from Tripoli described a loud explosion and billowing smoke at the Qaddafi compound, suggesting that military units or a command post there might have been a target.

That was a vivid sign that whatever their declared intentions, the military strikes by Britain, France and the United States that began on Saturday may threaten the government itself.

But there is also the risk that Colonel Qaddafi may not be dislodged by air power alone. That leaves the question of whether the United States and its allies are committing enough resources to win the fight. The delay in starting the onslaught complicated the path toward its end. It took 22 days from the time that Colonel Qaddafi's forces first opened fire on protesters in Libya for

the [United Nations](#) -backed military assault to begin. By the time American cruise missiles reached Libyan targets on Saturday, Colonel Qaddafi's troops, reinforced by mercenaries, had pushed Libyan rebels from the edge of Tripoli in western Libya all the way back to Benghazi in the east, and were on the verge of overtaking that last rebel stronghold.

But the strike, when it came, landed hard, turning the government force outside Benghazi into wreckage and encouraging the rebels to regroup.

"I hope it's not too late," Senator [John McCain](#) , Republican of Arizona, said on the CNN program "State of the Union" Sunday. "Obviously, if we had taken this step a couple of weeks ago, a no-fly zone would probably have been enough," he said. "Now a no-fly zone is not enough. There needs to be other efforts made."

Experts on the region, and even a few administration officials, acknowledge that the job of getting Colonel Qaddafi to step down might have been easier if the international assault had begun when rebels seemed to have held the upper hand, rather than when the anti-Qaddafi rebellion was compressed into Benghazi and its environs.

For Mr. Obama, who has explicitly said that Colonel Qaddafi has lost any right to govern, the conundrum is that the United Nations mandate does not authorize his removal. So Mr. Obama now says the goal is limited: to use force to protect the Libyan people and allow humanitarian aid to get through.

On Sunday, Adm. [Mike Mullen](#) , the chairman of the [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#) , said on "Meet the Press" on [NBC](#) that regime change was not the point of the military assault. "Certainly the goals of this campaign right now, again, are limited, and it isn't about seeing him go," Admiral Mullen said, referring to Colonel Qaddafi. "It's about supporting the United Nations resolution, which talked to limiting or eliminating his ability to kill his own people as well as support the humanitarian effort."

Asked if the military mission could be accomplished and Colonel Qaddafi still remain in power, Admiral Mullen replied: "That's certainly potentially one outcome."

At the same time, he said, the allies would like the government forces to return to their garrisons, but he said nothing about what the rebels should do under the alliance's protective umbrella.

House Republican leaders were quick to point out on Sunday that the objective of the operation was being left unclear.

"The president is the commander in chief, but the administration has a responsibility to define for the American people, the Congress, and our troops what the mission in Libya is, better explain what America's role is in achieving that mission, and make clear how it will be accomplished," Speaker [John A. Boehner](#) said in a statement.

The chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Representative Howard P. McKeon of California, asked: "Are our goals aimed at protecting civilians in Libya, or the removal of Muammar Qaddafi from power? In either case, to what extent and for how long will military resources be utilized?"

Even some allies, including members of the [Arab League](#), appeared to be wondering that.

Whatever the overt objectives, the damage to Colonel Qaddafi's grip on power is already significant. The backbone of his air defense network is in ruins, his air force is effectively grounded, his ground forces in the east were pummeled, and Admiral Mullen said his logistical supply lines were about to be cut.

And while Colonel Qaddafi was not a target, Admiral Gortney said, "If he happens to be in a place, if he's inspecting a surface-to-air missile site, and we don't have any idea if he's there or not, then. ..." He did not complete the sentence.

If Colonel Qaddafi manages to remain in power, that will leave the United States and the United Nations-backed mission looking like a failure, foreign policy experts from all sides of the political spectrum said. " [Barack Obama](#) told Qaddafi to go; if Qaddafi doesn't go, America will look diminished in the eyes of the world," said Steven Clemons, senior fellow at the New American

Foundation.

[Stephen J. Hadley](#), a former national security adviser to President [George W. Bush](#) and an architect of the 2003 Iraq invasion, said at a forum in San Francisco on Saturday that he feared the limited approach “could set us up for failure.”

“I don’t quite see what is behind the strategy in Libya,” Mr. Hadley said, speaking while a small clutch of protesters — mostly yelling chants about Iraq — were on the streets below. “We are now in a situation where we have a mismatch of what the president said we want to do as a nation, what the [U.N. Security Council](#) authorizes, and what we are actually ready to commit in resources.”

Mr. Obama, he said, “wants Qaddafi to go, but the U.N. Security Council resolution says we want to prevent a humanitarian disaster and attacks on civilians, and in terms of resources, the U.S. has been very reluctant to get involved militarily.”

Even many of Mr. Obama’s allies say that had the administration acted earlier — say 10 days earlier, before forces loyal to the Libyan leader took back so much territory — the process of ousting him would have been much easier. Senator [John Kerry](#), the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, among others, urged a quicker response.

The administration argued that its hands had been tied until the Arab League and the Security Council acted — and that it is not too late now. Supported by the coalition air strikes, administration officials say, the rebel forces will most likely have the ability to regain momentum.