

AFRICOM's General Ham: "Many of the troops involved in the Libya strikes are preparing to go to Iran or Afghanistan"

By Cynthia McKinney

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An Incisive Comment from Cynthia McKinney

AFRICOM's new leader, General Carter Ham made an interesting statement that no one in the special interest press (Junious Ricardo Stanton calls it the mind control apparatus) seems to have picked up on.

Here's the story and I've highlighted the real news contained in it that is being ignored everywhere and why does this article not mention the General's AFRICOM leadership:

*Ham said it was important for the U.S. to turn control over to NATO because many of the troops involved in the Libya strikes are preparing to go to **Iran** or Afghanistan or have just recently returned from the warfront.*

*Now, is this a typo? I don't know. But, I've checked this story in many different places and each iteration says exactly the same thing: **Iran!** Are our troops preparing to go to Iran? What conclusion are we to draw from this? Here's the entire article:*

General says US may consider sending troops into Libya as part of any international force

By Lolita C. Baldor, The Associated Press – 2 days ago

WASHINGTON — The U.S. may consider sending troops into Libya with a possible international ground force that could aid the rebels, the former U.S. commander of the military mission said Thursday, describing the current operation as a stalemate that is more likely to go on now that America has handed control to NATO.

But Army Gen. Carter Ham also told lawmakers that American participation in a ground force would not be ideal, since it could erode the international coalition attacking Moammar Gadhafi's forces and make it more difficult to get Arab support for operations in Libya.

He said NATO has done an effective job in an increasingly complex combat situation. But he noted that, in a new tactic, Gadhafi's forces are making airstrikes more difficult by staging their fighters and vehicles near civilian areas such as schools and mosques.

The use of an international ground force is a possible plan to bolster the Libyan rebels, Ham said at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

Asked whether the U.S. would provide troops, Ham said, "I suspect there might be some consideration of that. My personal view at this point would be that that's probably not the ideal circumstance, again for the regional reaction that having American boots on the ground would entail."

President Barack Obama has said repeatedly there will be no U.S. troops on the ground in Libya, although there are reports of small CIA teams in the country.

Pressed by Sen. John McCain, a leading Republican, about the situation in Libya, Ham agreed that a stalemate "is now more likely" since NATO took command.

Ham also disclosed that the U.S. is providing some strike aircraft to the NATO operation that do not need to go through the special approval process recently established. The powerful side-firing AC-130 gunship is available to NATO commanders, he said.

His answer countered earlier claims by the Pentagon that all strike aircraft must be requested through U.S. European Command and approved by top U.S. leaders, including Defence Secretary Robert Gates.

Ham said that process still applies to other fighters and the A-10 Thunderbolt, which can provide close air support for ground forces. He said that process is quick, and other defence officials have said it can take about a day for the U.S. to approve the request and move the aircraft in from bases in Europe.

Overall, he said the U.S. is providing less than 15 per cent of the airstrikes and between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of

the support effort, which includes intelligence gathering, surveillance, electronic warfare and refueling .

Recent bad weather and threats from Gadhafi's mobile surface-to-air missile systems have hampered efforts to use the AC-130 and A-10 aircraft for close air support for friendly ground forces. Ham said those conditions, which include as many as 20,000 shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles, contributed to the stalemate.

Ham said he believes some Arab nations are starting to provide training or weapons to the rebels. And he repeated assertions that the U.S. needs to know more about the opposition forces before it would get more deeply involved in assisting them.

Sen. John Cornyn, a Republican, complained that the lack of knowledge about the rebels is a U.S. intelligence failure.

"It strikes me as unusual and maybe something that Congress needs to look at further, that our intelligence capabilities are so limited that we don't even know the composition of the opposition force in Libya, " Cornyn said.

Ham said it was important for the U.S. to turn control over to NATO because many of the troops involved in the Libya strikes are preparing to go to [Iran](#) or Afghanistan or have just recently returned from the warfront.

"While we can certainly surge to meet operational needs," Ham said, "there is a longer-term effect if greater numbers of U.S. forces had been committed for a longer period of time in Libya and it would have had downstream operational effects in other missions."

Separately, State Department spokesman Mark Toner said U.S. envoy Chris Stevens' talks continue with the Libyan opposition in Benghazi.

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