

US Special Forces coordinating operations in Libya

Thomas Gaist
13 August 2016

American ground troops were involved in fighting in Libya this week, in operations that include supporting local militias and coordinating air attacks from a secret base just outside of Sirte, a coastal city that was reduced to rubble by the 2011 US-NATO bombing campaign.

“US forces have gone in and out of Libya to exchange information with these local forces in established joint operations centers, and they will continue to do so,” US Deputy Defense Press Secretary Gordon Trowbridge said on Wednesday.

The US Special Forces operating in Libya are based out of “joint operations rooms,” and are providing “intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and precision strikes—that will help enable GNA-aligned forces to make a decisive, strategic advance,” Trowbridge said.

US Africa Command (AFRICOM) plans more small deployments of US troops, Trowbridge said, and has launched airstrikes against some 30 targets since last week, in support of Libyan militias fighting on behalf of the Government of National Accord, which have reportedly succeeded in retaking some 70 percent of Sirte, previously held by Islamic State.

The Pentagon established at least two secret bases in Libya last fall, unnamed Defense Department sources told the *Washington Post* in May. US Special Operations forces are using the bases as springboards to develop joint operations with various local militias in preparation for the attack against Sirte.

These operations, though justified in the name of the “war against the Islamic State,” represent the spearhead of a renewed imperialist military intervention in Libya that aims to exploit the chaos produced by the 2011 war to assert control over the country’s oil resources and prepare the way for further neocolonial predations

throughout North Africa.

US forces are backing an array of proxy forces inside the war-devastated country, including the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar, who has been a known asset of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since the 1980s. Washington intends to develop a new “long-term mission” in Libya, US General Joseph Dunford said in May.

Beyond Libya, US military-intelligence cadres are “mapping local networks both friendly and unfriendly,” a retired US Special Operations Command officer said in May. Under the pretext of fighting the Islamic State-affiliated militant group Boko Haram, Washington organized an invasion of northern Nigeria by the Chadian and Cameroonian militaries in the opening weeks of 2015. The US-backed African forces are encamped around Lake Chad, where they are joined by a growing number of US commandos, in preparation for a direct US military intervention in Nigeria.

A new scramble for Africa is unfolding, under the leadership of American imperialism, which is expanding its interventions in every strategic area of the continent. The European powers, following in the wake of their American partners, are eager to re-establish their old colonial dominions.

France’s military is involved in military operations in Libya, as revealed by the death of three French soldiers in a secret operation last month, and has seized on the destabilization of Mali by the outflow of guns and fighters from Libya to development of a permanent presence of thousands of troops throughout the Sahel.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

--