

Escalation of Libya Bombing Campaign: NATO Doubled Missile, Bomb Strikes

RAF Tornados carry out 'deliberate, multiple strikes'

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RAF Tornados have carried out “deliberate, multiple strikes” aimed at robbing Colonel Muammar Gaddafi of command and control over his forces as Nato on Tuesday stepped up bombing raids over Libya

By Bruno Waterfield

Brussels: Brigadier-General Mark van Uhm, Nato’s chief of allied operations, also said that Alliance combat aircraft had destroyed significant numbers of tanks, armoured vehicles and rocket launchers besieging the Libyan city of Misurata on Monday night.

“We have been watching the situation in Misurata, and over the past 10 days fighting has been intense,” he said.

“Our forces have conducted numerous strikes in and around Misurata, and we have destroyed over 40 tanks and several armoured fighting vehicles there.”

Nato officials have signalled a new phase in operations, under Alliance control for three weeks, with major attacks on Tuesday by the RAF on communications infrastructure and the headquarters of Gaddafi’s elite 32nd Brigade located six miles south of Tripoli.

The 32nd Brigade, commanded by Col. Gaddafi’s son Khamis, has led and commanded military actions against the Libyan rebels.

“What we are doing is attacking the regime’s ability to supply and sustain these attacks not just in the area of Misurata but across the country,” said Gen. van Uhm.

Alliance sources said the number of Nato strike sorties ending with the use of missiles or bombs without being aborted has doubled over the last two weeks.

“Whenever Gaddafi tries to advance we destroy his supply lines and he has to fall back,” said the official. “We suspect he has had to force his troops to advance and we are whacking them. Now we’re taking out his communications. “

France has provided extra fighters to overcome a shortage of Nato combat planes and was moving its Charles De Gaulle aircraft near to Misurata to provide “faster rotations and targeting”, said a source.

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