

Five Years Later, US Is Carrying Out More Airstrikes in Libya

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Airstrikes in Libya were authorized by U.S. President Barack Obama as part of an open-ended campaign against the Islamic State group.

The United States have launched an open-ended airstrike campaign in Libya against the Islamic State group in what Washington said was a positive response to calls by the U.N.-backed government in Libya.

The latest campaign comes four years after NATO, led by the U.S., Britain and France, intervened in the country's Arab Spring-inspired uprising against longtime Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Since then, the country has been mired in chaos, with three different competing governments, a situation that has been exploited by extremists.

"The first airstrikes were carried out at specific locations in Sirte today causing severe losses to enemy ranks," Libyan Prime Minister Fayez Seraj said on state TV. Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said the strikes did not have "an end point at this particular moment in time."

Monday's airstrikes were the third the U.S. has carried out against the extremist group in Libya. The last acknowledged U.S. airstrikes in Libya were in the western city of Sabratha in February.

But U.S. officials said airstrikes are different, marking the start of a sustained air campaign .

The new Libya campaign has been authorized by U.S. President Barack Obama, who previously said the 2011 NATO intervention "didn't work" and was one of the things he regrets the most about his eight years in office.

The Islamic State group seized the coastal city of Sirte, the hometown of Gaddafi, last year, making it their most important base outside Syria and Iraq.

Libyan forces began an offensive to retake the city in May and fighters of the Islamic State group are now besieged in a few square miles of the center, where they hold strategic sites.

Just months before leaving office, the new intervention in Libya marks the latest front Obama has started in the Middle East as U.S. forces continue airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, while more ground troops have been sent to Iraq and special forces are fighting alongside the Kurdish-Arab coalition in northern Syria known as Syria Democratic Forces.

News of the new intervention had been circulating since early this year. Back in March, journalist and founder of The Intercept website Glenn Greenwald ridiculed the West's fresh

intervention when he titled an article on the issue: "The U.S. Intervention in Libya Was Such a Smashing Success That a Sequel Is Coming."

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