

Note from AFA President -- Libya, Radio piece, Book Recommendation

AFA Members, Congressional staff members, Civic leaders, DOCA members, in the past 24 hours, I've talked with several reporters on the feasibility of creating a No Fly Zone over Libya. I don't know if they will use any of my words ... but ... The note below was what I sent a friend who asked a specific question: Could the Libyan Air Defense system threaten the F-22 if it were used to set up a NFZ? I think it may shed light on the discussion of this military option.

Secondly, yesterday I did a radio piece on the tanker competition. It is not to do as easy as it might sound ... I did say one misstated word. See if you can find it. The link is:

<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?sid=2290164&nid=150&hw=dunn>

Finally, I want to point you to a new book. It is entitled: Global Air Power and is edited by John Andreas Olsen. [You might remember the editor in a few of his previous books [a link to Amazon provides a useful summary: [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_i\\_0\\_18?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=john+andreas+olsen&srefix=john+andreas+olsen](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_0_18?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=john+andreas+olsen&srefix=john+andreas+olsen)]. His A History of Air Warfare is on both CSAF's and my reading lists. This book is a compendium essays by noted Airpower authors from all over the world. The book is long (400+ pages), but the 10 essays can be considered mini-books in their own right. Gen (Ret) Charles A. Horner writes this about the book:

"Military air power is less than one hundred years old, yet today no land or sea force can prevail in battle when opposed by a capable, well-led air force. *Global Air Power* traces how air forces in a range of countries found their rightful roles in the context of national priorities and achieved preeminence despite entrenched beliefs in the primacy of land and sea forces. This book should be required reading for all military leaders, present and future."

For you consideration.

Mike

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President/CEO  
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[Name deleted], the air defense system could not threaten the F-22. The Libyans have older systems. The network is integrated for a common radar picture. However, their aircraft are older -- mostly Mig 21s and Mig 23s with some light attack/trainers and some ground attack aircraft. The Surface to Air missiles are also older SA-2s, SA-3s (Viet Nam era) and about 50 SA-6s. The latter are lethal to almost all aircraft except for the F-22. They would have to be dealt with in any regard. But it is not clear what kind of maintenance they have undergone ... nor how well the Libyans are trained on the system.

The central issue, in my mind, with a no-fly zone (NFZ) is a policy one. What do you want to do? It is too facile to say: Stop aircraft from killing people and destroying things ... as it begs the question of: "Soooooo, are you OK with ground forces killing people and destroying things?" If the latter is answered in the negative, then the air piece is only one part of a larger answer. [I worry this option is being considered just to be seen as "Doing Something."]

A second, but lesser important question is: How long do you want to do this. If the answer is: We don't know ... but plan for a month or so. Then we'll need a couple hundred aircraft for 24/7 ops ... and either 3-4 carriers plus land-based support or bases in nearby nations or both. Italy is the best choice ... and to get its OK, we'll need either a NATO sign off, a UN Security Council Resolution, or just plain leaning on a good friend with a weak government. Other basing options are a bit unsavory. Egypt probably won't help ... neither will Tunisia. Algeria has its own terrorist problems. Israel won't want to be seen in an active role. Other African choices are pretty far away with little infrastructure.

A subset of the first issue -- more in the tactical realm -- is you would want to take out some of the air defenses no matter what systems you use ... and that means killing Libyan troops ... with all the unintended consequences of such actions. Secondly, what do you do about helicopters? They are hard to kill ... especially if they know you are coming. What if they just set down on the top of a building? You can't get them with an air-to-air missile; you'd need bombs [or as some of our members have pointed out -- bullets] ... and that may mean civilian casualties ... especially if you don't hit that which you are aiming. Also, you don't generally configure fighters for both air-to-air missions and air-to-ground ones at the same time. Thus the need for more aircraft. The F-22 does carry both types of weapons internally and can do the job. I cannot address the policy question of whether Sec Gates would entertain a request from EUCOM/AFRICOM to deploy the F-22. Some believe he would be reluctant to approve the aircraft's deployment.

Finally, the Navy is not configured for round the clock operations, except in a short-term surge mode and has to keep a bit of its airpower to defend the fleet. This means less for NFZ ops. The good news is that you would not have to establish a NFZ over the entire country -- probably just the major cities and perhaps a few key air bases.

Bottom line: creating a NFZ over the country is "do-able" -- but not simple ... and I would want to get the policy pieces answered before we embarked on this option.

I know you didn't ask all this ... but ...

Best

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