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Obama Approves Drone Strikes in Libya

Posted By Jason Ditz

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Speaking at a Pentagon briefing early Thursday, Defense Secretary Robert [Gates announced that](#) President Obama has authorized the use of drone strikes in Libya. Drones had previously only been used in surveillance missions in the war.



NATO had been reportedly pressing for US drones to enter the war, particularly so they could launch attacks [in and around](#) the Western city of Misrata. The first mission was to begin Thursday evening, but bad weather forced its delay.

Marine Gen. James Cartwright said the drones were “uniquely suited” for attacks in urban areas, because they can fly lower and get better visibility on potential targets. Secretary Gates denied that the deployment of drones indicated a further escalation of the NATO-led war.

Rather Gates [said the deployment was](#) a “modest contribution” to the NATO war, and that the deployment of attack drones to launch strikes was purely for “humanitarian reasons.” The war began on March 19, just days after the UN approved a no-fly zone.