

Major General Nick Pope, the Chief of the Defence Staff's Communications Officer, said this morning:

"With Free Libyan Forces advancing into Tripoli, UK forces continued to strike at Colonel Qadhafi's remaining apparatus of repression within the city, as NATO maintained pressure on the former regime.

"On Sunday morning, Royal Air Force Tornado and Typhoon aircraft mounted a precision strike before dawn on the military intelligence operations room in Tripoli, close to the Baroni intelligence facility which the RAF had successfully bombed 24 hours previously. Nine Paveway guided bombs were delivered with great accuracy on the target. Later in the day, an armed reconnaissance patrol identified and destroyed one of Qadhafi's main battle tanks positioned on the outskirts of the city.

"At sea, HMS Liverpool was conducting surveillance off Tripoli when she sighted a small Maltese-registered vessel which had been damaged by hostile fire while leaving Tripoli port, apparently with evacuees embarked. The vessel was under way but her manoeuvrability was impaired. HMS Liverpool passed a line to the vessel and towed her to open waters where she was able to proceed safely. Liverpool alerted the Maltese authorities to the vessel's condition, and then was able to return to her duties off the coast.

"The strike missions flown by the RAF and other allied fast jets were only made possible by the large fleet of combat support aircraft mustered by NATO, including Royal Air Force VC10 and Tristar tankers, plus Sentry, Sentinel and Fleet Air Arm Sea King surveillance platforms. Since the start of military operations on 19 March, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army Air Corps strikes have damaged or destroyed over 890 former regime targets which posed a threat to the Libyan people, ranging from secret police and intelligence headquarters, to several hundred tanks, artillery pieces and armed vehicles.

"In the early hours of Saturday morning, Royal Air Force Tornado GR4s had conducted a precision strike on a key communications facility in south west Tripoli, used by the former regime intelligence organisations headed by Abdullah Senussi, concealed in a building known as the Baroni Centre. As ever with a target in the heart of the city, extreme care was taken in planning the mission to ensure any risk of civilian casualties was avoided. Five precision guided Paveway bombs made direct hits on the building. Heading south from Tripoli, the RAF aircraft then detected one of Qadhafi's main battle tanks on the outskirts of the city and destroyed it with a further Paveway weapon.

"In the course of Saturday afternoon, an RAF patrol successfully engaged an artillery piece on the western edge of Tripoli, and attacked a nearby command and control facility. Around midnight, Tornado and Typhoon aircraft destroyed another command and control facility, located in south west Tripoli, then proceeded east to Sirte, 240 miles away, to destroy a third such installation."

