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ROLE OF AMERICANS IN LIBYAN WARFARE CONFIRMED BY U.S.

State Department Depicts Any
Aid to Qaddafi's Attacks
as 'Reprehensible' Act

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2 — The United States today confirmed that Americans had been involved in military support activities in Libya and called the involvement "reprehensible."

According to Dean Fischer, a State Department spokesman, American citizens have been servicing planes of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's Libyan Air Force, including C-130 transports and CH-47 helicopters.

Mr. Fischer also said that he could confirm that American citizens had also served as crew members on charter flights from Libya to Chad on United African Airways, a Libyan line used to ferry troops and equipment. But, the States Department spokesman added, "Our information is that they have not been pilots" on either the military or troop-carrying charter planes. Libya, a militant Arab nation in North Africa, has been warring in Chad.

'Against Interest of Peace'

He added: "I want to repeat that we find it reprehensible and against the interest of peace and security in the region, for anyone, including American citizens, to contribute to Colonel Qaddafi's ability to carry out policies of aggression, subversion and terrorism."

Several pilots and technicians recently returned from Libya, who were interviewed by The New York Times, said that without the personnel and material that had been found for Libya in the West, Colonel Qaddafi would have had difficulty sustaining the intervention in Chad.

Mr. Fischer's comments appeared to indicate that the United States had known for some time about the involvement of American citizens in Libyan military efforts but had not made the information public. On Oct. 23, the State Department had said that there were no indications that Americans were involved with the Libyan Air Force.

He Implies Talks With C.I.A.

Mr. Fischer said today: "We choose not to publish all the information we have, particularly sensitive information based on nonpublished sources. When we are asked questions relating to such activity we are obliged to get authorization from other parts of the U.S. Government in order to share it."

Mr. Fischer indicated that there had been discussions with the Central Intelligence Agency about reports of American involvement in Libya. Mr. Fischer said he could not go into details of such discussions.

The Central Intelligence Agency has repeatedly denied that it has any involvement with Edwin P. Wilson, a former agent, who is now under Federal indictment for illegal transfer of explosives and is living as a fugitive in Tripoli.

Shortage of Expert Help

Recent articles in The Times have reported that recruiting activities in the United States and Europe by Mr. Wilson have provided the Libyan Government with vital support personnel for its activities in Chad, where Libyan troops have been in virtual occupation since last year. The Libyans are backing the Chadian Government of Goukouni Oueddei against insurgents still active near the border with the Sudan, which has backed the rebellion.

According to senior American intelligence officials, Libya, which has purchased an arsenal of military supplies from the Soviet Union, is severely short

of people trained to use and maintain the weapons and other equipment. Without Soviet advisers and the pilots and technicians recruited in the West, the officials have said, Libya's armed forces would be immobilized.

The pilots who were interviewed by The Times said that Americans were flying air force aircraft, including helicopters bearing the Libyan Air Force insignia, that were used in the intervention.

John Anthony Stubbs, a British pilot who worked for Mr. Wilson in Libya earlier this year, said that he had flown dozens of transport missions to southern Libya, near the border with Chad, carrying arms and other supplies. He said that the C-130's he flew brought in fuel needed by Soviet-built and Soviet-manned MIG fighters. "We were logistically keeping the Russians' MIG's airborne," he said.

U.S. Would Aid O.A.U.

Michael D. Bedwell, a former United States Army pilot who returned from Libya Oct. 8, said in an interview that "if the Americans left, not one Chinook helicopter would be flying."

Mr. Fischer said today that the United States would be willing to give "material assistance" to efforts by the Organization of African Unity to replace Libyan troops with African peacekeeping forces. The organization, backed by France, has been trying to assemble such a force for several months.

The State Department would not comment today on the legality or illegality of the American citizens' involvement in Libya. It referred questions on the subject to the Justice Department.

The Justice Department has said that the recruitment of American pilots and technicians would not appear to violate Federal laws.

Officials in the department said that it was illegal for Americans to enlist in military forces of a foreign government. In the case involving Libya, Americans were recruited and paid by a Swiss company controlled by Mr. Wilson. This would put Mr. Wilson's program outside the jurisdiction of American laws.