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The start of military action in Libya was marked by U.S. and coalition forces quickly carving out a no-fly zone across a large section of Libyan airspace. The U.S. military carried the predominant share of mission responsibility, leading the coalition in terms of aircraft sorties and strikes.

For anyone watching, the strength and effectiveness of America's military was on display. Now it's NATO's turn.

The international coalition that directly supported the Libyan mission is now in the lead, with NATO standing at the forefront. From the first days of the Libyan operation, there has been heavy criticism about the way the mission was organized, its execution and the lack of coordination with Congress on the part of the Obama administration. All of this is a typical byproduct of any military campaign. And it almost goes without saying that Congress will have a say in what happens from here - as it should.

These criticisms aside, transferring mission responsibility to NATO was the right decision. In all aspects of the Libyan operation, there is no part for the United States beyond providing limited mission support, such as logistics and intelligence. This is not only due to Europe's close proximity to the Libyan coastline. It's also a matter of ensuring the global security burden is more equally divided.

NATO is more than capable of seeing this mission all the way through, but the United States must still proceed cautiously to guarantee the Libya operation does not turn back to an American-led effort. In other words, NATO cannot be a euphemism for American combat resources, troops and funding. No matter how the operation proceeds, what's essential is that both the president and Congress make this point abundantly clear and stand firm against any attempt to return the United States to any type of leadership role in Libya.

American military muscle can be a defining factor in any engagement. In Afghanistan, where the U.S. mission is flying under the NATO flag, progress is slow but advancements continue to

occur, thanks in large part to Gen. David H. Petraeus. The U.S. military is undeniably out front in Afghanistan and will continue leading the way to ensure mission success is achieved, since it's in our immediate national security interests to do so.

With the focus of the U.S. military on Afghanistan, it's time for our NATO allies to step up and do their part in Libya. That means devising strategic objectives, containment policies and the end-state, none of which should fall on the United States to decide.

The situation in Libya is a real opportunity for our international partners to show their strength to the rest of the world and carry the security burden on their shoulders, even if only for a while. It's their turn to deliver.