

# The Benghazi 9/11 Attack: The Forgotten History of the 2012 Attack on the U.S. Consulate in Libya

By [Sam Jacobs](#)

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*If you say “September 11” most people automatically think of the attacks on the World Trade Center buildings and the Pentagon on [September 11, 2001](#). What they probably don’t even remember happened on September 11, were the attacks on the United States Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, in 2012.*

Once the [Libyan Revolution](#) began in February 2011, the CIA began placing assets in the region, attempting to make contacts *within* the region. [Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens](#), whose name and image would soon become synonymous with the Benghazi attacks, was the first liaison between the United States and the rebels. The task before the American intelligence community at that time was securing arms in the country, most notably [shoulder-fired missiles](#), taken from the Libyan military.

Eastern Libya and Benghazi were the primary focal points of intelligence-gathering in the country. But there was something else at work here: The [CIA was using the country](#) as a base to funnel weapons to anti-Assad forces in Syria, as well as their alleged diplomatic mission.

## Early Rumblings of Disorder in Benghazi

Trouble started in April 2012. This was when two former security guards of the consulate threw an IED over the fence. No casualties were reported, but another bomb was thrown at a convoy just four days later. Soon after, in May, the office of the [International Red Cross](#) in Benghazi was attacked and the local [al-Qaeda](#) affiliate claimed responsibility. On August 6, the Red Cross suspended operations in Libya.

This was all part of a troubling escalation of violence in the region. The British Ambassador [Dominic Asquith](#) was the victim of an assassination attempt on June 10, 2012. As a result of this and of rocket attacks on convoys, the British withdrew their entire consular staff from Libya in late June of that year.

American military and consular personnel on the scene were increasingly troubled by the situation and communicated their concerns to top brass through official channels. Two security guards in the consulate noticed a Libyan police officer (or at least someone dressed as one) taking pictures of the building, which raised alarms. Indeed, consular officials had been requesting additional security as far back as March.

On June 6, 2012, [a large hole was blown in the wall of the consulate gate](#). It was estimated that 40 men could go through the hole in the wall. In July, the State Department informed officials on the ground that the existing security contract would not be renewed. On August

2, Ambassador Stephens requested additional security detail. The State Department responded by completely removing his security detail three days later. Three days after this, his security detail had left Libya entirely. On August 16, the regional security officer warned then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton that the security situation in Libya was “dire.”

### The Day of the Attack on Benghazi: The Cover-Up Begins

The September 11, 2012 attack was actually two attacks by two separate militias. The first was the attack on the diplomatic mission, the second was a mortar attack on the CIA annex. But the attacks themselves were effectively watched in real time by the White House, thanks to security drones in the region. By 5:10pm ET, President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta were watching real-time footage via a drone deployed to the area.

Half an hour later, the State Department officially refused to deploy the [Foreign Emergency Support Team](#) (FEST). FEST exists specifically for rapid response to terrorist attacks around the world and have special training with regard to defending American embassies. Within three hours, an Islamic group in the region had claimed responsibility for the attack. Approximately six hours after the first shots were fired, two former [Navy SEALs](#) who constituted the only serious defense forces for the consulate were killed by enemy fire. The surveillance drone had been watching them fight on their own for over two hours.

At 10:30 that night, Hillary Clinton nebulously blamed “inflammatory material on the Internet” for the attack. The notion that the attack was motivated by [Innocence of Muslims](#) was absurd: On the day before the attack, the leader of al-Qaeda in the region called for vengeance due to the death of his secretary. Three days after the attack, Stephens’ personal diary was found unsecured, along with all the other sensitive intelligence information in the compound.

For days, the film was blamed despite the White House having full knowledge that it was a terrorist attack. Indeed, on September 14, Barack Obama promised the father of one of the slain Navy SEALs not that he would bring to justice those who planned the attack, but *the man who made the movie*.

On September 20, 2012, the White House [spent \\$70,000 on apology videos](#) for the film. One day later, ten days after the attack, Clinton admitted to the public what she had known for over a week: That this was a coordinated terrorist attack. However, on the 25th, President Barack Obama addressed the United Nations once again blaming the video, giving what is perhaps one of the more memorable quotes of his presidency: [“The future must not belong to those who slander the Prophet of Islam.”](#)

On September 27, 2012, [Nakoula Basseley Nakoula](#) was arrested in Los Angeles for parole violations, all of which were related to his production of the film and served a year in jail. He was later sentenced to death *in absentia* by the Egyptian government.

Barack Obama did not attend his daily intelligence briefing for six consecutive days prior to the attacks, instead campaigning for re-election against Mitt Romney.

Susan Rice, then acting as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, made the rounds on no fewer than five major Sunday morning talk shows, a process known as “the Full Ginsburg.” On these shows, she was armed with a set of talking points from the CIA.

These talking points included the false assertion that these were spontaneous protests inspired by similar protests against the American Embassy in Cairo, with no connection to institutional terrorism.

The Rice appearances and the talking points she was provided with further confirm a general pattern: The Obama Administration was fundamentally incapable of acknowledging who the real enemy was. And when things went wrong, the focus was not on setting them right to protect Americans in the future, but on protecting the image of the Obama Administration – most notably the President and the Secretary of State. Hence the blame was shifted from Islamic terrorist groups onto a YouTube video.

### The (Seemingly Endless) Benghazi Investigations

There were no fewer than 10 investigations of the attack on Benghazi, none of which found evidence of wrongdoing, despite several of them having been run by Republicans.

However, the American public did get some valuable information out of these hearings, not least of all that Hillary Clinton doesn't value the lives of American servicemen. For example, the attention of Hillary Clinton's deleted emails first came to the State Department and the United States Congress thanks to these investigations. Indeed, [approximately 30](#) of the "gone with the wind" emails from her private, home-brewed server related to the non-response to the attack on Benghazi. This is according to the State Department itself.

But still the question remains: Why let these men die? And why lie about it for days after the fact?

The answer lies in two political concerns: First, the re-election of Barack Obama, second the planned candidacy of Hillary Clinton.

The date of the attack is very important: This was the final weeks of a presidential election campaign. And while Obama won handily (in no small part due to the aloof, patrician image of Bain Capital principal Mitt Romney), he is nothing if not a savvy politician. An attack on the United States Consulate in Libya was not something he wanted in public consciousness during an election season, not least of all if it were the result of a terrorist attack from what had formerly been a stable nation, slowly coming into the fold of what is euphemistically called "the International Community."

For Clinton, the situation was even more dire. She effectively "owned" the situation in Libya, as the remaking (and ultimately destruction) of North Africa was one of the signature projects of her tenure at State. What's more, she certainly owned the security situation on the ground, which likely was never secure.

The building was given the designation of "temporary," largely to get around a number of regulations that apply to permanent State Department buildings. The request for more security from Ambassador Stephens might have been ill advised not because it was impossible to secure the location in any kind of long-term and sustainable way. The right move might very well have been to remove American personnel entirely, but this would have gone against the official narrative that everything was going swimmingly in Libya.

Other countries and organizations (such as the Red Cross) were leaving because they could not protect their people. The Clinton State Department saw this as unthinkable, because it would represent a failure and contradict the narrative.

And while Republican-led committees did not find any wrongdoing, it's important to note that they also complained of [being stonewalled by the administration](#) at every turn. It's hard to uncover evidence of wrongdoing when there is an institutional campaign to prevent you from getting any evidence at all.

A number of whistleblowers and other sources show that there were additional forces ready to go in the region to defend the consulate. So why were none of them deployed? Why were four American lives lost due to inaction at the highest levels of government?

Why no one was deployed is perhaps down more to incompetence and bad policy than any kind of a conspiracy. Our [article on 9/11](#) is instructive on this matter: sometimes the cover-up is a conspiracy to conceal idiocy and failure of the actual event. In the case of Benghazi, while there is evidence to point toward a politically motivated cover-up, the actual event, like the 9/11 attacks, seems mostly to be a result of bad policy and incompetence rather than malice.

In this case, the bad policy was the Obama Administration's desire to avoid even the appearance of "boots on the ground" and hand wringing about getting the permission of Libya (and about 12 other countries) to deploy assistance to the consulate. This was part of the general political philosophy of appeasement of Islamic terrorists that marked the Obama Administration.

This explains the stand-down orders which official sources have denied, but which have been confirmed by a number of whistleblowers and leaked documents since the attacks.

Both the President and the Secretary of Defense issued orders to deploy forces, but none were deployed. Once the Ambassador was confirmed as missing, a two-hour meeting ensued where top men within the Obama Administration came up with a number of action items, mostly revolving around the YouTube video (fully five of ten action items were related to the video) and hand wringing regarding a lack of permission from the Libyan government to protect our own forces.

The Americans in the CIA Annex were eventually evacuated to the airport by members of a militia comprised of former Qadaffi regime loyalists, *not* the opposition militias that were nominally allied with the United States. Meanwhile, actual American forces spent a bunch of time putting on and taking off their uniforms and tactical gear because the instructions from Washington changed by the minute.

It was a total paralysis of action on the ground by the top brass in D.C., because they were afraid of it looking like ground forces were being deployed, both from the perspective of the political response at home and the political response in Libya. As a result, four Americans died and a massive cover-up was rolled out to protect those responsible for grossly negligent inaction.

After the fact, emails were sent out, the purpose of which was less about finding out what went wrong to prevent it from happening again and to assign responsibility, than it was about making sure everyone was on the same page with regard to talking points.

The attack on Benghazi, the deaths of four Americans and the ensuing cover-up are an insightful view into the reality lurking behind many so-called "conspiracy theories." What began as bureaucratic bungling and ideologically driven hamfistedness became a cover-up

and, in a sense, a conspiracy *after the fact*. None of this is meant to let Obama-Clinton off the hook. Indeed, none of the criticisms of Obama-Clinton become any *less* sharp when they are considered as incompetence and butt-covering.

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