



Benghazi: Two Years Later

As The Second Anniversary Draws Near, Benghazi Still Clouds Clinton's Political Ambitions

The House Select Committee Tasked With Investigating Benghazi, Along With The Upcoming Anniversary, Is Sure To Bring "A Headache For The Teams Surrounding Hillary Clinton." "The special House committee investigating Benghazi is finally expected to begin its work, in earnest, with its first hearing the week Congress returns from August recess. ... Add that to the usual fare that accompanies the anniversary of any major news event and you get a headache for the teams surrounding Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. For both, it's a stubborn political problem that will likely never go away, no matter how many investigations clear the senior players of the worst allegations of wrongdoing." (Alex Seitz-Wald, "Benghazi Coming Back With A Vengeance In September," [MSNBC](#), 9/1/14)

- **According To Reports, The Benghazi Panel Is Set To Hold Its First Public Hearing Next Week.** "The bipartisan House committee appointed to investigate the deadly 2012 terrorist attack on a U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, [sic] Libya will hold its first public hearing next week, according to news reports." (Josh Hicks, "House Benghazi Panel To Hold First Hearing Next Week," [The Washington Post](#), 9/9/14)

For Clinton, Benghazi Is "A Stubborn Political Problem That Will Likely Never Go Away." "Add that to the usual fare that accompanies the anniversary of any major news event and you get a headache for the teams surrounding Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. For both, it's a stubborn political problem that will likely never go away, no matter how many investigations clear the senior players of the worst allegations of wrongdoing. And it's little doubt why: Polls suggest that Clinton is vulnerable on Benghazi ahead of a potential 2016 presidential run, with members of both parties listing it as her biggest weakness." (Alex Seitz-Wald, "Benghazi Coming Back With A Vengeance In September," [MSNBC](#), 9/1/14)

- **"Polls Suggest That Clinton Is Vulnerable On Benghazi Ahead Of A Potential 2016 Presidential Run, With Members Of Both Parties Listing It As Her Biggest Weakness."** "And it's little doubt why: Polls suggest that Clinton is vulnerable on Benghazi ahead of a potential 2016 presidential run, with members of both parties listing it as her biggest weakness." (Alex Seitz-Wald, "Benghazi Coming Back With A Vengeance In September," [MSNBC](#), 9/1/14)

Clinton Has Already Signaled That She May Not Cooperate With Congressional Investigators

Clinton Has "A Lot" Of Private Notes About The Benghazi Attack, But Has Signaled She May Not Be Willing To Turn Over Those Notes To Investigators. "Hillary Clinton has 'a lot' of private notes about the 2012 terrorist attacks on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, but she might not be willing

to turn them over to the the congressional committee that's investigating the incident.” (Hunter Walker, “Hillary Clinton Has Private Benghazi Notes And She Might Not Give Them To Investigators,” [Business Insider](#), 6/10/14)

- **When Asked By NBC If She Would Turn Over Her Benghazi Notes, Clinton Claimed Congressional Investigators Could “Read It” In Her Book.** “McFadden then noted Clinton's book includes ‘great detail’ about ‘what was happening in Benghazi as it evolved.’ ‘Did you keep a diary?’ McFadden asked. ‘I kept a lot of notes,’ said Clinton. However, when McFadden asked Clinton whether she would turn those notes over to the committee, Clinton implied she would want to see whether the committee was overly political first. ‘They can read it in the book,’ she said of the investigators. ‘Let's see if it's on the level or not. I don't want to be part of anything that in any way politicizes or demeans the sacrifice that we saw happen there.’” (Hunter Walker, “Hillary Clinton Has Private Benghazi Notes And She Might Not Give Them To Investigators,” [Business Insider](#), 6/10/14)

FLASHBACK: Clinton, In *Hard Choices*: “Being Responsive And Transparent With Lawmakers Was A Priority Starting Immediately After The Attacks.” “As a former Senator I understand and have a great deal of respect for the oversight role that Congress is meant to play. Over my eight years serving on Capitol Hill, I exercised that responsibility many times when I believed there were tough questions that needed answers. So being responsive and transparent with lawmakers was a priority starting immediately after the attacks.” (Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 2014)

CLINTON MAY TRY TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITY ON BENGHAZI, BUT IT IS STILL THE DEFINING MOMENT OF HER TENURE AS SECRETARY

“The Most Memorable Moment Of Her Tenure Was A Tragic One, The Killing Of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens And Three Other Americans In Benghazi...” “Yet even some Clinton admirers acknowledge the absence of a breakthrough, headline-grabbing accomplishment—no Marshall Plan, no détente with the Soviets, no Dayton Accords. The most memorable moment of her tenure was a tragic one, the killing of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012. Republicans intend to use the incident to attack Clinton if she runs for the White House in 2016, and there is no single achievement that would be a counterbalance.” (Jill Lawrence, “What If John Kerry Outperforms Hillary Clinton As America’s Top Diplomat?” [National Journal](#), 8/1/13)

- **The Benghazi Attack “Was The Biggest Debacle” Of Her Term As Secretary Of State.** “Clinton accepted responsibility but not blame for the deaths of a U.S. ambassador and three other Americans in Libya last year. It was the biggest debacle of her term and became a white-hot political issue for Republicans.” (Anne Gearan, “What Is Clinton’s Legacy At State—And Her Future,” [The Washington Post](#), 1/31/13)

And Though Clinton May Try To Duck Responsibility On The Attack, She Does “Deserve Some Blame”

Just This Summer, ABC’s Diane Sawyer Called Out Clinton For Ducking Responsibility On The Attack In Benghazi. DIANE SAWYER: “Is there anything you personally should have been doing to make it safer in Benghazi?” HILLARY CLINTON: “What I did was give very direct instructions that the people who have the expertise and experience in security --” SAWYER: “But personally you --” CLINTON: “Well that is personal, though, Diane. I am not -- I’m not equipped to sit and look at blueprints to determine where the blast walls need to be or where the reinforcements need to be. That’s why we hire people who have that expertise.” SAWYER: “I wonder if people are looking for a sentence that begins from you, ‘I should have. I should have.’” (ABC’s [“Good Morning America,”](#) 6/12/14)

- **Sawyer: “I Wonder If People Are Looking For A Sentence That Begins From You, ‘I Should Have. I Should Have.’”** (ABC’s [“Good Morning America”](#) 6/12/14)

Clinton Does “Deserve Some Blame” As “She And Her State Department Colleagues Were Taken By Surprise By The Rise Of New Jihadist Groups In Libya And The Region.” “It may be unfair to fault Clinton for the deadly attack on U.S. personnel in Benghazi, Libya, which occurred last September. Nonetheless, she became the first secretary of state to lose an ambassador in the field since Adolph Dubs was killed in 1979, while Cyrus Vance held the office. And Clinton does deserve some blame for what she herself admitted in Senate testimony about the incident: that she and her State Department colleagues were taken by surprise by the rise of new jihadist groups in Libya and the region. ‘We’ve got to have a better strategy,’ she said. ‘The Arab Spring has ushered in a time when al Qaeda is on the rise.’ Clinton thus appeared to concede what the former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney had relentlessly argued during the 2012 campaign: that the terrorist group responsible for 9/11 and its offshoots are not close to being defeated.” (Michael Hirsh, “The Clinton Legacy,” [Foreign Affairs](#), May/June 2013)

DESPITE EARLY WARNINGS, CLINTON’S STATE DEPARTMENT REPEATEDLY DENIED REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL SECURITY

Just Last Week, CIA Contractors Said They Warned That An Attack In Benghazi Would Cost Lives Due To Lack Of Security

CIA Contractor On Benghazi Security: I Bluntly Warned That An Attack On The Compound Would Be Deadly. CIA CONTRACTOR 1: “They were their own security, yeah. Diplomatic security. They didn’t have like an American force, like a marine detachment, they did it themselves.” BRET BAIER: “So what did you tell them?” CIA CONTRACTOR 1: “Me in my bluntness, I said, ‘you know if you guys get attacked, you guys are going to die. You know that right?’ And I remember I said, ‘if you ever need us, you just call us, we’ll come get you.’” (Fox News’ [“13 Hours At Benghazi”](#) 9/5/14)

- **Contractor: “Me In My Bluntness, I Said, ‘You Know If You Guys Get Attacked, You Guys Are Going To Die. You Know That Right?’”** CIA CONTRACTOR 1: “Me in my bluntness, I said, ‘you know if you guys get attacked, you guys are going to die. You know that right?’ And I remember I said, ‘if you ever need us, you just call us, we’ll come get you.’” (Fox News’ [“13 Hours At Benghazi”](#) 9/5/14)

Another CIA Contractor On Ambassador Stevens Coming To Benghazi: “We Were Thinking, There’s Only Five Guys To Protect Him And That’s A Huge Compound.” BAIER: “What’s your reaction when you hear the ambassador is coming to Benghazi on September 10, September 11, of all days?” CONTRACTOR 2: “We were thinking, there’s only five guys to protect him and that’s a huge compound.” (Fox News’ [“13 Hours At Benghazi”](#) 9/5/14)

Clinton’s State Department Rejected Requests For Additional Security

The Foundation For Defense Of Democracies’ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross: Whether Clinton’s State Department Did Not Honor Requests For Additional Security In Benghazi “Is Established Fact.” “‘There are disagreements about whether State acted reasonably, but that it didn’t honor requests for additional security is established fact,’ said Georgetown University adjunct assistant professor Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, who is also a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which focuses on foreign policy and national security.” (“Hillary Clinton’s State Department Cut Security In Libya Before Deadly Terror Attacks, Sen. Ron Johnson Says,” [PolitiFact](#), 5/19/14)

- ***The Washington Post* Headline: “State Dept. Acknowledges Rejecting Requests For More Security In Benghazi”** (Anne Gearan, “State Dept. Acknowledges Rejecting Requests For More Security In Benghazi,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/10/12)

The State Department’s Accountability Review Board Found That The Number Of Security Staff In Benghazi Leading Up To The Attack Was Inadequate, “Despite Repeated Requests” For Additional Staffing. “Overall, the number of Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) security staff in Benghazi on the day of the attack and in the months and weeks leading up to it was inadequate, despite repeated requests from Special Mission Benghazi and Embassy Tripoli for additional staffing. Board members found a pervasive realization among personnel who served in Benghazi that the Special Mission was not a high priority for Washington when it came to security-related requests, especially those relating to staffing.” (Accountability Review Board, [U.S. Department Of State](#), 12/18/12)

REPORTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE ATTACK WAS “PREVENTABLE”

A Bipartisan Senate Intelligence Report Found The Benghazi Attack Was “Preventable”

***The New York Times* Headline: “Benghazi Attack Called Avoidable In Senate Report”** (Mark Mazzetti, Eric Schmitt, And David D. Kirkpatrick, “Benghazi Attack Called Avoidable In Senate Report,” *The New York Times*, 1/15/14)

The Senate Intelligence Committee Released A “Scathing” Report, Which Found The Attack In Benghazi Could Have Been Prevented. “The Senate Intelligence Committee Wednesday released a scathing new report on the 2012 terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya, charging the attack could have been prevented and that the Obama administration used inadequate intelligence in initially blaming it on spontaneous protests.” (John Stanton, “Senate Intelligence Committee: Benghazi Attack Was Preventable,” [BuzzFeed](#), 1/15/14)

- **“The P-Word – ‘Preventable’ – Is What Stings Most For Clinton.”** (Aaron Blake, “For Clinton, Benghazi Report Has Some Good, Mostly Bad—But No Ugly,” [The Washington Post](#), 1/15/14)

The Report Found That The State Department, Then Under Hillary Clinton, Refused Requests To Increase Security Despite Warnings. “The report was done by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and found that State, then under Hillary Clinton, refused requests to boost security despite warnings from the CIA and its own staff about the danger of militant attacks.” (Oren Dorell, “Democrats Join GOP To Blame State In Benghazi,” [USA Today](#), 1/15/14)

- **“‘The State Department Should Have Increased Its Security Posture More Significantly In Benghazi Based On The Deteriorating Security Situation,’ The Report Argues.”** (John Stanton, “Senate Intelligence Committee: Benghazi Attack Was Preventable,” [BuzzFeed](#), 1/15/14)

The Former Deputy Chief Of Mission In Benghazi Says The Blame Lies With Washington And Clinton’s State Department

Former Deputy Chief Of Mission Greg Hicks: The Blame For Benghazi “Lies Entirely With Washington.” “Some have been suggesting that the blame for this tragedy lies at least partly with Ambassador Chris Stevens, who was killed in the attack. This is untrue: The blame lies entirely with Washington.” (Gregory N. Hicks, Op-Ed, “Benghazi And The Smearing Of Chris Stevens,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/22/14)

- **Hicks: Ambassador Chris Stevens’ Requests For Additional Security Were Denied Or Ignored, And Officials In Washington Were To Blame For The Reduced Security In Benghazi.** “To sum up: Chris Stevens was not responsible for the reduction in security personnel. His requests for additional security were denied or ignored. Officials at the State and Defense Departments in Washington made the decisions that resulted in reduced security. Sen. Lindsey

Graham stated on the Senate floor last week that Chris ‘was in Benghazi because that is where he was supposed to be doing what America wanted him to do: Try to hold Libya together.’ He added, ‘Quit blaming the dead guy.’” (Gregory N. Hicks, Op-Ed, “Benghazi And The Smearing Of Chris Stevens,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 1/22/14)

MEANWHILE, CLINTON HAS CONTINUED TO DEFEND SUSAN RICE AND THE ROLE OF THE YOUTUBE VIDEO

In Her Memoir, Clinton Again Blames An Anti-Islamic Video For Playing A Role In Benghazi, Arguing It Was “Indeed A Factor” And Calling It A “Common Sense” Assumption. “I myself went back and forth on what likely happened, who did it, and what mix of factors— like the video— played a part. But it was unquestionably inciting the region and triggering protests all over, so it would have been strange not to consider, as days of protests unfolded, that it might have had the same effect here, too. That’s just common sense. Later investigation and reporting confirmed that the video was indeed a factor. All we knew at that time with complete certainty was that Americans had been killed and others were still in danger. (Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 2014)

- **Clinton: “Susan Stated What The Intelligence Community Believed, Rightly Or Wrongly, At The Time. That Was The Best She Or Anyone Could Do.”** (Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 2014)

Clinton: “The Extensive Public Record Now Makes Clear That Susan Was Using Information That Originated With And Was Approved By The CIA.” “The extensive public record now makes clear that Susan was using information that originated with and was approved by the CIA. The earliest drafts of the talking points written and circulated by the Agency said, ‘We believe based on currently available information that the attacks in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.’ That assessment didn’t come from political operatives in the White House; it came from career professionals in the intelligence community. It was written by intelligence officials for use by members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Democrats and Republicans alike, who asked David Petraeus at the end of a briefing on Benghazi on Friday the 14th what part of what they heard behind closed doors they were allowed to say on television. The points were not designed to be an exhaustive account of every piece of intelligence; they were merely meant to help already briefed Congressmen make public statements while staying clear of classified or sensitive material. None of the intelligence officials working on that request had any idea the talking points would be used two days later by Susan. This is another conspiracy theory that flies in the face of facts— and reason.” (Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Hard Choices*, 2014)

As Clinton Maintains That A YouTube Video Was “Indeed A Factor” In Benghazi, Other Officials Quickly “Dismissed” The Video

Senate Intelligence Chair Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) “Took Issue With The Notion That The Libya Strike Was Sparked By A U.S.-Made Anti-Islam Video Online.” “The chairwoman of the Senate Intelligence Committee said that key conclusions of a recent New York Times investigation into the 2012 Benghazi attack are wrong. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) rejected the Times’s conclusion that al Qaeda wasn’t responsible for the attack that killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. She also took issue with the notion that the Libya strike was sparked by a U.S.-made anti-Islam video online.” (Julian Pecquet, “Feinstein Rejects NYT On Benghazi,” [The Hill](#), 1/14/14)

- **Feinstein, On The Idea Benghazi Evolved From A Protest Against The Video: “It Doesn’t Jibe With Me.”** “She also disputed the notion that the Sept. 11, 2012, assault evolved from a protest

against the video, which was widely disseminated by Islamic clerics shortly before the attack. 'It doesn't jibe with me,' she said." (Julian Pecquet, "Feinstein Rejects NYT On Benghazi," [The Hill](#), 1/14/14)

Retired Africom General: I Dismissed The Idea That Benghazi Resulted From A YouTube Video.

REP. ISSA: "And in the hours that ensued after the attack on our consulate compound in Benghazi, did you hear YouTube video?" GEN. LOVELL: "Briefly discussed, but not from any serious standpoint." REP. ISSA: "What time did you first hear that there was a video, roughly?" GEN. LOVELL: "It would -- it was early on in the evening of September 11th." REP. ISSA: "Before 3:15 in the morning." GEN. LOVELL: "Yeah, absolutely. We were -- absolutely; I would have to say probably dismissed that notion by then, by working with other sources." REP. ISSA: "OK. I just want to follow up with this one last thing. You heard about this early on, and you -- as the deputy and the highest-ranking person that moment, working these issues, you dismissed the idea that this attack was, in fact, a demonstration that went awry and was based on a YouTube video out of Los Angeles." GEN. LOVELL: "Yes, sir; short answer." (House Oversight And Government Reform Committee, U.S. House Of Representatives, [Hearing](#), 5/1/14)

Former Deputy CIA Director Mike Morell: "When [Rice] Talked About The Video, My Reaction Was, That's Not Something That The Analysts Have Attributed This Attack To."

MORELL: "I did not see her on the Sunday shows. As I said, I was in a deputies' meeting, and I--" MILLER: "You've never seen it since?" MORELL: "--it was probably days later that I read what she said on the shows." MILLER: "And what was your reaction when you finally did?" MORELL: "My reaction was twofold. One was that what she said about the attacks evolving spontaneously from a protest was exactly what the talking points said, and it was exactly what the intelligence community analysts believed. When she talked about the video, my reaction was, that's not something that the analysts have attributed this attack to." (House Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence, U.S. House Of Representatives, [Hearing](#), 4/2/14)

Former Deputy Chief Of Mission Greg Hicks: "I Think Everybody In The Mission Thought It Was A Terrorist Attack From The Beginning."

"I think everybody in the mission thought it was a terrorist attack from the beginning,' Greg Hicks, a 22-year foreign service diplomat who was the highest-ranking U.S. official in Libya after the strike, told investigators under authority of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Hicks, the former U.S. Embassy Tripoli deputy chief of mission, was not in Benghazi at the time of the attack, which killed Chris Stevens - then the U.S. ambassador to Libya - and three other Americans." (Lindsey Boerman, "Official: We Knew Benghazi Was Sa Terrorist Attack 'From The Get-Go,'" [CBS News](#), 5/5/13)

And White House Emails Show Involvement In The Sunday Show Talking Points

The Washington Post Headline: "White House E-Mail Reinforces Benghazi Talking Points" (Colby Itkowitz, "White House E-Mail Reinforces Benghazi Talking Points," [The Washington Post](#), 4/29/14)

A September 14, 2012 Email From White House Advisor Ben Rhodes Shows An Attempt To Reinforce Obama's "Strength And Steadiness" Following The Attack In Benghazi. "To reinforce the President and Administration's strength and steadiness in dealing with difficult challenges." (Ben Rhodes, [Email](#), 9/14/12)

- **In The Email Sent To Fellow Administration Officials, Rhodes Said The Goal Was "To Underscore That These Protests Are Rooted In An Internet Video, And Not A Broader Failure Of Policy."** (Ben Rhodes, [Email](#), 9/14/12)

The Rhodes Email Was Sent To Top White House Advisors, Including David Plouffe, Dan Pfeiffer, Jay Carney, Jennifer Palmieri, And Josh Earnest. (Ben Rhodes, [Email](#), 9/14/12)