

October 14, 2012



They Said It!

Obama Senior Campaign Advisor: On Libya, Obama Reacted Like We'd Want Him To React



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Obama Senior Campaign Advisor David Axelrod: "The President Has Reacted As You'd Want The President To React To This." FOX NEWS' CHRIS WALLACE: "Well, but it doesn't quite square with the facts, sir, because Charlene Lamb, who was a top State Department official, said in that sworn hearing that she was in real-time communication, real-time communication with the people on the ground in Benghazi. So, there was a difference of opinion between what the intelligence community was saying and what the State Department was saying. The State Department officials, we said, said that was never our conclusion that there was a spontaneous protest which raises this question: how soon after the attack did the president meet with the National Security Council, with people from State, with people from the -- the Director of National Intelligence, with all of the various people to try to sort out what happened in Benghazi?" OBAMA SENIOR CAMPAIGN ADVISOR DAVID AXELROD: "Look, we are sorting out what happened there. Understand that the president, the day after the attack, called it an act of terror and charged everyone with responsibility to get to the bottom of what happened. Why, and as the first order of business, to make sure we bring to justice the terrorists who were responsible for this act. So, the president has reacted as you'd want the president to react to this. But, just getting back to your point on

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the State Department. Just a second, Chris. You talked about the State Department spokesman. You had representatives of the State Department, testifying under oath, this week, before Congress, and they said what I said to you, which is that anyone, based on the intelligence that they had at the time, would have said what the administration said, what Ambassador Rice said, the day after the attack.” (Fox News’ [“Fox News Sunday,”](#) 10/14/12)

Axelrod Then Avoided Saying Whether Or Not Obama Met With His National Security Council Before Leaving To Campaign In Nevada. FOX NEWS’ CHRIS WALLACE: “The reason I ask this is because you say, well, the president made a statement. Yes, the president made a statement, and then he went off to a fundraiser or to a campaign stop in Nevada. Question: before he went to the fundraiser in Nevada, did he meet with his National Security Council to try to sort out the shifting stories, because State says they never said it was a spontaneous demonstration, and intel did, you’re quite right. Did he meet with the National Security Council before he went to campaigning in Nevada?” OBAMA SENIOR CAMPAIGN ADVISOR DAVID AXELROD: Chris, I assure you that the president was in contact with all those who had information and responsibility in the national security chain about this incident. Again, let me stress: there isn’t anyone on this planet who feels a greater sense of responsibility for our diplomats, for our service people, who takes this more personally than the President of the United States, and he is determined to get to the bottom of what happened, to bring these killers to justice, these terrorists to justice, and to make sure whatever adjustments we have to make, we make.” (Fox News’ [“Fox News Sunday,”](#) 10/14/12)

OBAMA’S REACTION HAS BEEN TO STONEWALL AND BLAME OTHERS

The Obama Administration’s Explanation Of The Benghazi Attack Has Been “Evolving And At Times Muddled.” “Her remarks added to the administration’s evolving and at times muddled explanation of what happened on the evening of Sept. 11 and into the next morning. Republicans in Congress have accused President Obama of playing down possible terrorist involvement in the midst of a re-election campaign in which killing Osama bin Laden and crippling Al Qaeda are cited as major achievements.” (Steven Lee Myers, “Clinton Suggests Link To Qaeda Offshoot In Deadly Libya Attack,” [The New York Times](#), 9/26/12)

After Focusing On The Protests Against The Anti-Islam Video For The First Week After The Attack, The Obama Administration Finally Reached The “Belated Conclusion” That It Was A Coordinated Assault By Terrorists With Connections To Al Qaeda. “For days after the attack, intelligence officials and the Obama administration said it was likely the outgrowth of protests sparked by an anti-Islamic video made in the U.S. Intelligence officials now believe the attack was carried out by local militants who were in contact with regional members of al Qaeda-affiliated groups, using the eruption of protests elsewhere as an opportunity to mount an assault on U.S. installations. That belated conclusion has raised questions about the adequacy of intelligence and security preparations at U.S. diplomatic posts abroad as they confront both old and newer risks.” (Siobhan Gorman And Matt Bradley, “Militant Link To Libya Attack,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/1/12)

- **On September 19, National Counterterrorism Center Director Matt Olsen Told The Senate Homeland Security Committee That Ambassador Stevens Had Been “Killed In The Course Of A Terrorist Attack On Our Embassy.”** SEN. JOSEPH LIEBERMAN (ID-CT): “So, let me begin by asking you whether you would say that Ambassador Stevens and the three other Americans died as a result of a terrorist attack.” NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER DIRECTOR MATT OLSEN: “Certainly on that particular question, I would say yes, they were killed in the course of a terrorist attack on our embassy.” (Homeland Security And Governmental Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate, Hearing, 9/19/12)
- **But On September 20, Obama Contradicted His Administration When He Said We Still Did**

Not Know If Terrorists Had Attacked The Benghazi Compound, Claiming, “What We Do Know Is That The Natural Protests That Arose Because Of The Outrage Over The Video Were Used As An Excuse By Extremists...” QUESTION: “We have reports that the White House said today that the attacks in Libya were a terrorist attack. Do you have information indicating that it was Iran, or al Qaeda was behind organizing the protests?” OBAMA: “Well, we’re still doing an investigation, and there are going to be different circumstances in different countries. And so I don’t want to speak to something until we have all the information. What we do know is that the natural protests that arose because of the outrage over the video were used as an excuse by extremists to see if they can also directly harm U.S. interests –” QUESTION: “Al Qaeda?” OBAMA: “Well, we don’t know yet.” (President Barack Obama, Remarks At The Univision Town Hall, [Miami, FL](#), 9/20/12)

One Month After The Attack, A House Oversight Committee Hearing “Highlighted The Obama Administration’s Continued Difficulty Presenting A Consistent Explanation About What Happened In The Benghazi Attack.” “The hearing highlighted the Obama administration’s continued difficulty presenting a consistent explanation about what happened in the Benghazi attack. In appearances on television shows the next Sunday, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, cast the attack as a spontaneous uprising prompted by the inflammatory video.” (Jay Solomon and Dion Nissenbaum “Security Cut Before Libya Raid,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/10/12)

- **The Hearing Came Just After The State Department Distanced Itself From Obama’s Libya Narrative, Saying They Never Suspected That The Benghazi Attack Was Linked To Protests Against An Anti-Islam Video.** “Wednesday’s highly anticipated hearing came as the State Department disclosed for the first time that it never concluded that the consulate attack was fueled by furor over an anti-Islam video circulating on YouTube — an explanation that congressional Republicans have long publicly doubted.” (Seung Min Kim, “Partisan Fireworks At Libya Hearing,” [Politico](#), 10/10/12)

Biden At The Vice Presidential Debate: “We Weren’t Told They Wanted More Security. We Did Not Know They Wanted More Security There.” (Vice Presidential Debate, [Danville, KY](#), 10/11/12)

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- **Biden’s Comment Came After “The State Department Has Made Clear” That They Were Aware Of Diplomat’s Calls For More Security.** “Biden was soaring along on foreign policy at the start of the debate, making a clear argument in response to a question about what happened in Benghazi ... until he said that the administration didn’t know that diplomats there had wanted more security. In fact, the State Department has made clear they did, which is among the many issues at play in the investigation into what happened in the violence that left four Americans dead.” (Maggie Haberman, “7 Takeaways From The Danville Debate,” [Politico](#), 10/12/12)

Following Biden’s Debate Comments, Carney Refused To Say That The Buck Stops With Obama In Matters Of Diplomatic Security. FOX NEWS’ ED HENRY: “Can you say on Libya, that basically the buck stops with the State Department on security then, it doesn’t stop at the White House?” WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JAY CARNEY: “Well that’s an unartful, made for television phrasing, Ed. But the fact of the matter...” HENRY: “So you’re saying it’s up to the State Department, that the President can’t, that basically, he doesn’t make those assessments, is what you said the first time.” CARNEY: “There are thousands of diplomatic personnel across the world. There are countless facilities around the world. And I am saying when it comes to the number of personnel who are in place at consulates and embassies and other diplomatic facilities around the world, those decisions are appropriately made at the State

Department by security personnel. When it comes to funding, yeah, this president fights to make sure that embassy security and diplomatic security is adequately funded and make sure that that funding is restored when efforts on Capitol Hill are made principally by House republicans, including Congressman Ryan to slash it in order to cut taxes for the wealthiest 2% in this country. You bet that's the President's responsibility and he has demonstrated that he's kept that responsibility." (White House Press Briefing, [Washington, DC](#), 10/12/12)

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Obama Has Been Criticized For His Leadership Failures After The Deadly Attack

The Wall Street Journal: "Rather Than Accept Responsibility, The Administration Has Tried To Stonewall And Blame Others." "Four Americans lost their lives in Benghazi in a terrorist attack that evidence suggests should have been anticipated and might have been stopped. Rather than accept responsibility, the Administration has tried to stonewall and blame others. Congress should call hearings to hold someone accountable for this debacle." (Editorial, "The Libya Debacle," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/26/12)

- **NBC's David Gregory:** "They're just sowing more confusion about this rather than resolving the issue, which is creating more of an issue." (MSNBC's "Andrea Mitchell Reports," 10/12/12)

CNN's John King: The Obama Administration Has Reacted By "Public Scolding, Publicly Blaming Others For What Happened In The Administration." CNN's WOLF BLITZER: "And there's the whole notion of throwing the intelligence community under the bus saying 'that's what they were telling us, we were only reporting what they were telling us,' which is awkward for a vice president to do that." CNN's JOHN KING: "It's awkward for anybody. If you talk to people in the intelligence community and now at the State Department, they're not happy. They're not happy. The leaders of the administration, in their view, Jay Carney speaks for the president, so that's the President of the United States, the Vice President last night, on stage last night, essentially publicly scolding, publicly blaming others for what happened in the administration. Those people don't like that." (CNN's "[The Situation Room](#)," 10/12/12)

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