



What Biden Didn't Know

Biden Says The Obama Administration Was Unaware Of U.S. Security Needs In Libya

Biden: "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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OBAMA'S STATE DEPARTMENT REJECTED MULTIPLE REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL SECURITY FOR U.S. DIPLOMATS IN LIBYA

In Response To Pleas For Additional Security Personnel, The Obama Administration Cut Staff In Libya

State Department Officials Told Congress That They Had Rejected Requests For Increased Security Personnel In The Months Before The 9/11 Benghazi Attack. "Senior State Department officials acknowledged to Congress on Wednesday that they had turned down requests to send more U.S. military personnel to guard diplomatic facilities in Libya shortly before the Sept. 11 attack that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. ... Wood's team left Libya in August after Lamb had refused to approve extending its assignment for a second time. She said the State Department planned to turn over most basic protective duties to a Libyan guard force, part of a decade-long shift away from using U.S. Marines to protect embassies. Lamb said the mix of State Department officers, Libyan guards and militiamen 'could do the same function' as the U.S. military." (Ken Dilanian and Kathleen Hennessey, "U.S. Declined Requests To Boost Security In Libya, Congress Told," [Los Angeles Times](#), 10/10/12)

- **Security Officers Testified Before Congress That The State Department Responded To Their Requests For Additional Security In Libya With Cutbacks.** "The State Department scaled back U.S. security staff in Libya in the weeks and months before the Sept. 11 attack in Benghazi that killed four Americans, despite requests for additional personnel, former U.S. security officials told a politically charged congressional hearing." (Jay Solomon and Dion Nissenbaum "Security Cut Before Libya Raid," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 10/10/12)

"U.S. Ambassador To Libya Chris Stevens Wanted A Security Support Team, Made Up Of 16 Special Operations Soldiers, To Stay With Him In Libya After Their Deployment Was Scheduled To End In August." "U.S. Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens wanted a Security Support Team, made up of 16 special

operations soldiers, to stay with him in Libya after their deployment was scheduled to end in August, the commander of that security team told ABC News. The embassy staff's "first choice was for us to stay," Lt. Col. Andrew Wood, 55, told ABC News in an interview. "That would have been the choice of the embassy people in Tripoli." (Jake Tapper, "Security Team Commander Says Ambassador Stevens Wanted His Team To Stay In Libya Past August," [ABC News](#), 10/8/12)

U.S. Security Officials Repeatedly Warned The State Department That "More Not Less" U.S. Security Personnel Were Needed In Libya. "The former head of a Special Forces 'Site Security Team' in Libya tells CBS News that in spite of multiple pleas from himself and other U.S. security officials on the ground for 'more not less' security personnel, the State Department removed as many as 34 people from the country in the six months before a terrorist attack in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three others. Lt. Col. Andy Wood will appear this week at a House Oversight Committee hearing that will examine security decisions leading up to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi. Speaking to CBS News correspondent Sharyl Attkisson, Wood said when he found out that his own 16-member team and a six-member State Department elite force were being pulled from Tripoli in August - about a month before the assault in Benghazi - he felt, 'like we were being asked to play the piano with two fingers. There was concern amongst the entire embassy staff.' He said other staffers approached him with their concerns when the reduction in security personnel was announced." ("Ex-U.S. Security Team Leader In Libya: 'We Needed More Not Less' Security Staff," [CBS News](#), 10/8/12)

- **Former Head Of Regional Security In Libya: "The Security In Benghazi Was A Struggle And Remained A Struggle Throughout My Time There."** "The security in Benghazi was a struggle and remained a struggle throughout my time there,' Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wood told the committee. 'The situation remained uncertain and reports from some Libyans indicated it was getting worse. Diplomatic security remained weak. In April there was only one U.S. diplomatic security agent stationed there,' he said." (Susan Cornwell and Tabassum Zakaria, "U.S. Security At Benghazi Mission Called 'Weak,'" [Reuters](#), 10/10/12)

Describing The Bureaucratic Opposition He Encountered When In Libya, Former Embassy Security Officer Eric Nordstrom Said, "For Me, The Taliban Is On The Inside Of The Building." REP. JIM JORDAN (R-OH): "Lieutenant-colonel Were you pulling your hair out? Were you just flabbergasted? What can we do? What can we say? What can we put in writing? What can we say on the phone, what can we -- what else can we do? Was that your sense, an attitude, when you got the answers from Washington that you did?" LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW WOOD: "We were fighting a losing battle. We couldn't even keep what we had. We were not even allowed to keep what we had." REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER ERIC NORDSTROM: "If I could add to that. I told the same regional director in a telephone call in Benghazi after he contacted me when I asked for 12 agents. His response to that was, you're asking for the sun, moon, and the stars. And my response to him, his name's Jim, I said Jim, you know what makes it the most frustrating in this assignment? It's not the hardships, it's not the gun fire, it's not the threats. It's dealing and fighting against the people, programs and personnel who are supposed to be supporting me. And I added it by saying, for me, the Taliban is on the inside of the building." (U.S. House Of Representatives, Oversight And Government Reform Committee, [Hearing](#), 10/10/12)

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OBAMA'S STATE DEPARTMENT WAS CLEARLY AWARE OF DETERIORATING SECURITY IN LIBYA AND DID NOT ACT

The Obama Administration Chose To Rely On Libyan Security Forces Despite The “High” Security Risk To U.S. Personnel

Less Than Two Months Before The Benghazi Attack, The State Department Determined That U.S. Personnel Faced A “High” Risk Of Violence And The Libyan Government Was Not Prepared To Respond. “Less than two months before the fatal attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, the State Department concluded that the risk of violence to diplomats and other Americans in Libya was high and that the weak U.S.-backed government in Tripoli could do little about it. ‘The risk of U.S. Mission personnel, private U.S. citizens and businesspersons encountering an isolating event as a result of militia or political violence is HIGH,’ a State Department security assessment from July 22 concludes.” (Anne Gearan, “Before Attack On U.S. Mission In Libya, State Dept. Concluded Risk Of Violence Was High,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/9/12)

Still, U.S. Officials “Had Not Reinforced The U.S. Diplomatic Outpost There To Meet Strict Safety Standards For Government Buildings Overseas. Nor Had They Posted A U.S. Marine Detachment, As At Other Diplomatic Sites In High-Threat Regions.” “On the eve of his death, U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens was ebullient as he returned for the first time in his new role to Benghazi, the eastern Libyan city that embraced him as a savior during last year’s civil war. He moved around the coastal town in an armored vehicle and held a marathon of meetings, his handful of bodyguards trailing discreetly behind. But as Stevens met with Benghazi civic leaders, U.S. officials appear to have underestimated the threat facing both the ambassador and other Americans. They had not reinforced the U.S. diplomatic outpost there to meet strict safety standards for government buildings overseas. Nor had they posted a U.S. Marine detachment, as at other diplomatic sites in high-threat regions.” (Ernesto Londoño and Abigail Hauslohner, “In Libya, Security Was Lax Before Attack That Killed U.S. Ambassador, Officials Say,” [The Washington Post](#), 9/29/12)

After A June Bombing At The U.S. Consulate In Benghazi, The State Department Chose To Rely On The Fledgling Libyan Government To “Increase Its Security Around U.S. Facilities.” QUESTION: I’ve got a lot of stuff on Israel, but I want to start with – just assuming you don’t have a whole hell of a lot to say about the bombing in Libya, maybe you could get through that first. Is there – was there any damage done? And do you expect – or do you think that this was in any way retaliation for al-Libi’s death? STATE DEPARTMENT DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON MARK TONER: “Sure.” QUESTION: “Did – have you asked for security to be tightened? And if you have done that, when did you do it? Did you do it before this bombing, after the confirmation of al-Libi’s death?” TONER: “Okay. Let me start, and if you have any follow-up questions, I’ll try to endeavor to answer them. As Matt mentioned, we deplore the attack on our diplomatic mission in Benghazi. Fortunately, no one was injured in the attack. And we’ve also requested the Libyan Ministry of Interior to increase its security around U.S. facilities. In answer to your specific question, Matt, I’m not sure of the timing. I believe it was following the attack. If that’s different, I’ll let you guys know.” (State Department Daily Press Briefing, [Washington, DC](#), 6/6/12)

- **“The State Department Was Eager For The American Diplomatic Presence In Libya To Reduce Its American Security Footprint And To Rely More On Locals.”** “Eric Nordstrom, the former Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Libya, told congressional investigators looking into the murder of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, that the State Department was eager for the American diplomatic presence in Libya to reduce its American security footprint and to rely more on locals, sources tell ABC News. A senior State Department official denies the charge.” (Jake Tapper, “Security Officer In Libya Refers To Post Being Directed To ‘Normalize’ Operations And Reduce U.S. Security Presence,” [ABC News](#), 10/9/12)