

2012 Benghazi Attacks

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Libyan Instability

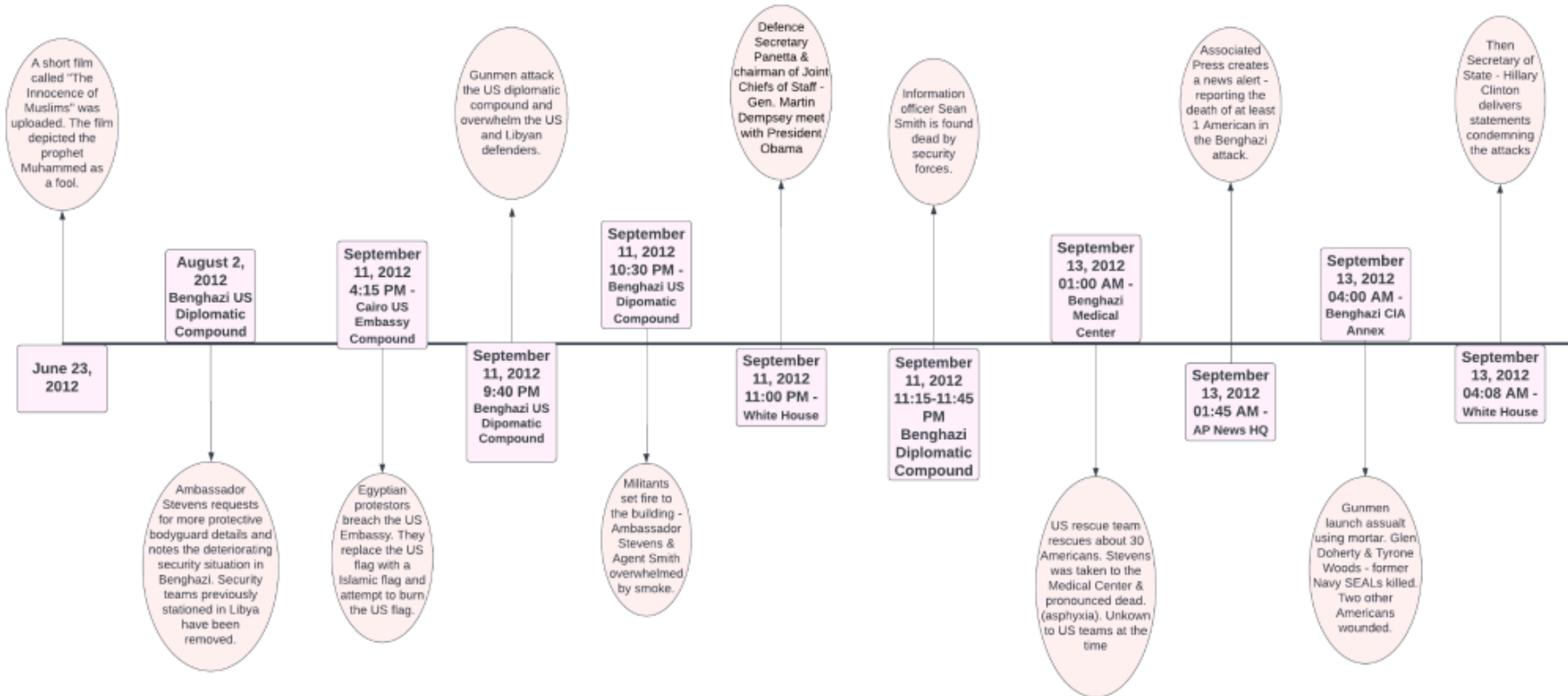
- In 2011, an uprising led to an armed revolt and NATO intervention.
- During the period of the Benghazi attack these militia groups were active:
 - Ansar al-Sharia
 - February 17th Martyrs Brigade
 - Libyan Shield Forces
 - Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade
 - 17th of February Brigade



US Interests

- Ambassador Stevens was there to help Libya develop a democratic government and strengthen US-Libyan relationship.
- The CIA complex nearby the US Consulate was allegedly part of an effort recover MANPADS.





All Times Local

Investigative Matrix

Who? (Suspects)	When? (Date)	Why? (Motives)	How? (Evidence)
Ansar al-Sharia	September 11, 2012	Opposing US presence in Libya and to establish a strict Islamic state in the country.	Eyewitnesses say they saw Ansar al-Sharia flags and members of the group were spotted. The group also released a statement after the attack praising it and urging more attacks against the US in Libya.
Mustafa al-Imam	September 11, 2012	Motive not entirely clear but he was (allegedly) the leader of the attack.	Al-Imam's DNA was found at the scene on a grenade fragment and was also seen in a video near the US compound moments before the attack.
Ahmed Abu Khattala	September 11, 2012	Anti-American sentiment and extremist beliefs. Co-leader of Ansar al-Sharia and was involved in previous attacks on Western targets in Libya.	Surveillance footage catches Khattala directing the attack and carrying weapons during the attack.
Mohammad Jamal Abu Ahmed	September 11, 2012	Response to controversial anti-Islamic video criticizing Prophet Muhammad. One of the leaders of Ansar al-Sharia.	No clear evidence but he was identified as one of the key planners of the attack and involved in the recruitment of militants for Ansar al-Sharia.

Investigative Matrix

Sufyan bin Qumu	September 11, 2012	Anti-American sentiment and extremist beliefs. Involved in earlier attacks as well.	Former Guantanamo Bay detainee who had fought with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. US Intelligence pins him at the scene of the attack.
Obama Administration	September 12, 2012	Downplaying the attack as a terrorist attack to avoid a political fallout during the 2012 presidential election.	Security at the compound was pitiful, even after extra security personnel was requested weeks in advance. The response to the attack was weak and inadequate.
Secretary Hillary Clinton	September 12, 2012	Misleading the public about the nature of the attack due to political reasons.	Clinton used her private email which could have compromised sensitive information regarding Benghazi. She also didn't provide enough security to the US Embassy in Benghazi.
Libyan security forces	September 11, 2012	Against Western influence and angered by the anti-Islamic video insulting Prophet Muhammad.	Libyan security forces may have warned the militants of the US Ambassador's location. The personnel guarding the US Embassy may have been involved in the attack.

Indicators - Signs of Attack

- Tripwires were crossed without consequences.
- April 6, 2012: IED thrown over wall of US facility in Benghazi.
- May 22, 2012: Red Cross building hit by two RPGs.
- June 2012: Pro-Gaddafi Facebook page noted Ambassador Steven's runs and made a threat.
- June 2012: Red Cross attacked again.
- June 6, 2012: US Consulate in Benghazi bombed by IED.
- June 10, 2012: British Ambassador attacked by RPG
- Aug 16, 2012: Classified State Department warning that Benghazi Consulate was vulnerable.
- Libyan guards for Consulate Benghazi were being warned to leave by family.