

9/11 Take Two

by Jeffrey Steinberg

Sept. 16—Despite frantic denials by the Obama Administration, there is now clear evidence that the murder of U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three other State Department personnel on Sept. 11 was a pre-meditated, highly professional attack, carried out by members of al-Qaeda-affiliated organizations. While White House spokesman Jay Carney attempted to conceal the truth about the attack by claiming that the U.S. had “no actionable intelligence,” the fact is, that American officials in Benghazi were warned at least 72 hours before the attack that they were in danger.

On Aug. 27, the U.S. State Department issued a detailed travel warning, telling American citizens to avoid all non-essential travel in Libya, noting specifically that the increase in political violence in the Benghazi region had reached serious levels.

As eyewitness debriefings are compiled of the 9/11 attack on the Benghazi consulate, it is becoming more clear that a highly professional attack on the compound, from three directions, was launched, using the cover of the protests outside the consulate as cover for the operation. Intercepted communications between leaders of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and members of the local Benghazi group, Ansar al-Sharia, on the day of the attack have provided U.S. intelligence agencies with further evidence that the attack was ordered by higher-ups in the al-Qaeda organization.

Indeed, the day after the killings, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active component of the global Sunni jihadi apparatus, claimed credit for the attack, and called the murder of Ambassador Ste-

vens a “revenge killing,” in retaliation for the U.S. drone assassination of a Libyan al-Qaeda leader, Abu Yahya al-Libi, in Pakistan in June.

The fact that the Obama Administration persists in claiming that the attack was spontaneous is not surprising. The Administration failed miserably to provide adequate security at the Benghazi consulate. There were no Marine guards posted. Security was left in the hands of an outsourced private company in Qatar, and there was far too much reliance on the local Benghazi public safety committee which, itself, was penetrated by Ansar al-Sharia operatives.

The Obama Administration has a great deal of explaining to do. Among the questions that will be pursued by Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.), and Susan Collins (R-Me.), the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, respectively, are whether the President was personally informed of the worsening security situation in Libya. Was there any information in his Presidential Daily Briefings (PDB), the most sensitive intelligence briefing in the government, alerting him to the dangers? If so, did he even read the PDB (according the Government Accountability Institute, a private think tank, the President has only attended 40% of his daily briefings, preferring to simply read the daily reports on his iPad)?

Answers Must Be Provided

The attack on Benghazi represents a security breach of the highest order. Four Americans were killed through negligence. Answers must be provided. And so



There is now incontrovertible evidence that the attack on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, Libya (shown here, following the Sept. 11 attack), which killed four Americans including the Ambassador, could have been prevented.

far, the President's position has been to deny that the incident represented a second 9/11 attack, and to continue to promote the fiction that the overthrow of Qaddafi has led to a "democratic transition" in Libya. In fact, the unconstitutional U.S.-led overthrow of the Libyan government has already resulted in a spreading jihadi insurgency in other parts of Africa, starting in neighboring Mali, and extending all the way to Syria.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has publicly warned that the United States is pursuing the same horribly flawed policy in Syria that the former Soviet Union pursued in Afghanistan, with the known disastrous consequences. Furthermore, Putin has warned repeatedly that the United States is repeating the folly of aligning with Sunni jihadi forces in the effort to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Indeed, the head of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, issued a video statement last week, calling on neo-Salafi fighters to join in the effort to bring down the Assad government and establish an Islamist fundamentalist state in Syria.

Last week, the founder of the French organization Doctors Without Borders, issued a report from Aleppo, Syria, where he had spent two weeks working in a hospital under the control of rebels. He warned that the opposition is now highly penetrated by foreign radical jihadis, who have hijacked the entire insurgency.

The destabilization of Syria has spilled over into neighboring Turkey, where the Army is now engaged in a counterinsurgency war against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), and hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees are creating a humanitarian and economic crisis for

the Erdogan government. Since the beginning of September, CIA Director David Petraeus, State Department official William Burns, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey have all visited Istanbul, to get an assessment of the situation there.

The greater Southwest Asia region is looking more and more like the Balkans on the eve of the outbreak of World War I. The Middle East has become a cockpit for general war, and there is no confidence that President Obama is going to side with the war-avoidance forces in the United States, led by the Joint Chiefs and the LaRouche political forces, who are warning of the danger of a

regional war rapidly turning into a thermonuclear war, drawing in all the major nuclear superpowers—the United States, Russia, and China.

Both the Cameron government in the United Kingdom and the Netanyahu government in Israel are pressing for direct military intervention against both Syria and Iran. This week, 25 nations are participating in the largest naval maneuvers in history in the Persian Gulf, and Britain and France are simultaneously conducting joint naval maneuvers in the eastern Mediterranean off the Syrian coast. Between the two separate war games, six aircraft carrier groups are deployed in close proximity to Syria and Iran—three U.S. carriers are in the Persian Gulf for the maneuvers there, a U.S. carrier group is permanently deployed in the Mediterranean, and the British and French have one carrier group each in the war games they have begun. With irresponsible political leaders at the top in London, Paris, and Washington, and with the buildup of military forces in the Middle East cockpit, the danger of war is greater than at any time in recent memory.

The Benghazi attack must be seen in this context. The 9/11 action there has sparked anti-American rioting across the Muslim world, ostensibly over the posting on YouTube of an inflammatory movie trailer produced in Hollywood. Taliban and other Afghan groups have been waging a non-stop asymmetric war against the remaining American and NATO troops in Afghanistan. The Obama Administration's response has been to escalate the campaign of drone assassinations, which will only intensify the out-of-control conflict across Eurasia.

Obama Must Answer

Sept. 19—Several U.S. Senators have demanded that the Obama Administration provide answers to the obvious questions about the lax security which allowed the murder of Libyan Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other U.S. personnel.

- On Sept. 13, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) called for hearings on the lack of intelligence, security, and appropriate response to the attacks on American embassies.

- On Sept. 13, Sens. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) and Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) introduced S.B. 3551, which requires “investigations into and a report on the Sept. 11-13, 2012, attacks on the United States missions in Libya, Egypt, and Yemen.” Reports on the investigations are to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and House Committee on Foreign Affairs, within 30 days.

- On Sept. 14, Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Susan Collins (R-Me.), the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, sent a letter to Harold W.

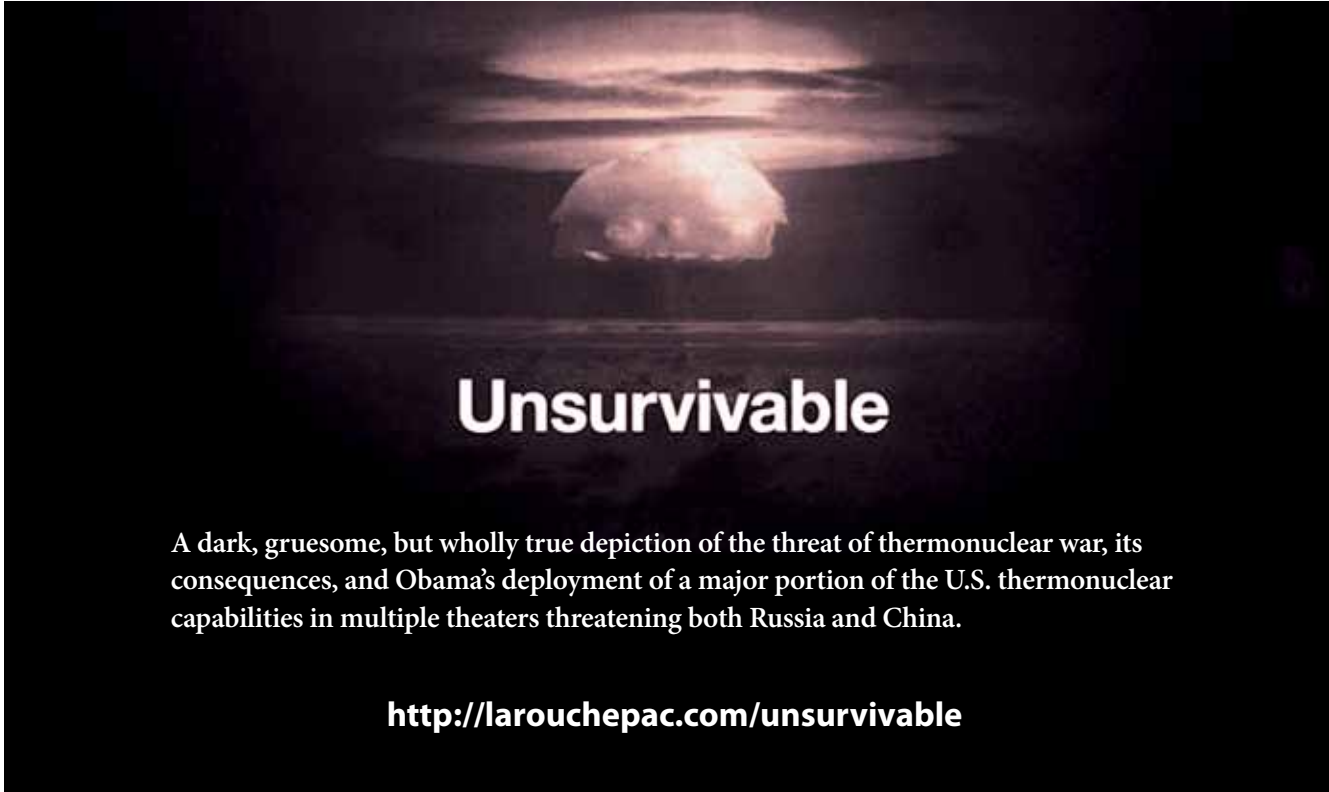
Geisel, Deputy Inspector General of the State Department, demanding answers to detailed questions about the lack of security at the Benghazi consulate.

- Also on Sept. 14, Collins posted the following statement on her website:

“During the past two days, I have participated in classified briefings by the National Counterterrorism Center and the Department of Defense on the attacks on our consulate in Benghazi during which four Americans, including Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, were killed.

“The lack of security provided to the Ambassador and other American personnel in Benghazi is deeply troubling and inexplicable given the dangerous threat environment in that city. Earlier attempts in June to reportedly attack the British ambassador and to plant a bomb outside of our consulate clearly demonstrated how dangerous and unsettled Benghazi is. Surely, the State Department should not have relied on Libyan nationals to guard the consulate. Rather, armed U.S. Marines should have been assigned to provide security.

“The kind of weapons used by the attackers also strongly suggests to me that this attack was planned and not the result of a spontaneous protest. . . .”



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