

Terrorists Attacked Our Embassy, Why the Cover-Up by the Obama Administration?

Over the last few days I've been focusing on the chain of events that led to the horrifying security breakdown in Benghazi (the "crime"). But leaving aside the crime, why the cover-up? Why would the administration invest so much of its credibility in the mob/video explanation?

After all, the security breakdown would perhaps be even more outrageous if a mere spontaneous mob could break through a consulate's defenses and kill an American ambassador. While we can't know for certain why the administration continued to tell the mob/video tale long after it was clearly false, we do know the following:

1. The **Arab Spring** has thus far been a disaster for American interests. Egypt, the most important Arab country, is under Muslim Brotherhood rule, Tunisia is in the hands of the Islamists, Yemen is a cauldron of tribal violence, and Syria is in the midst of a brutal civil war with jihadists taking an increasing role in the opposition military effort.
2. Until Sept. 11, 2001, Libya was the one, shining, exception to this disastrous trend. NATO helped topple a longtime anti-American terrorist without any loss of Western life (Hillary Clinton was pleased enough to even publicly spike the football-saying of Gadhafi, "We came. We saw. He died."), and the Libyans bucked the Arab Spring electoral trend by rejecting the Muslim Brotherhood in favor of a "centrist" party.
3. Those gains, however, are all for naught if this "centrist" party is incapable of effective rule, and large chunks of Libya spiral into chaos or fall into the effective control of

jihadists.

4. A complex terror attack (including accurate indirect fire, if current reports can be believed) betrays the existence of a much wider terror networks in Benghazi. As a general rule, for every terror attack, you can extrapolate much larger infrastructure. For example, rare is the truly “lone” suicide bomber—he (or she) is almost always supported by a network that includes recruiters, arms suppliers, bomb makers, etc. The continually escalating violence in Benghazi, culminating in an extremely bold frontal assault on one of our diplomatic compounds, is evidence that Libya’s government has lost effective control of its own streets in a key city and that jihadists are ascendant.

5. Consequently, it shows the strategic bankruptcy of an anti-terror strategy focused so completely on a high-profile “kill list.” Wishful thinking to the contrary, violent jihad is not simply the product of a few masterminds (the “few extremists” of popular progressive legend) but instead of a genuine mass movement in many parts of the Middle East, of a culture of hatred and racism. You can’t merely swap out leaders and expect to change cultures or deter jihadists. Israel has been very proficient at killing enemy leaders for many, many years—and those strikes certainly have short-term value in degrading operational capability—but is Israel any closer to ending the Jihad against its very existence?

6. If, however, the attack was merely a spontaneous reaction to an outrageous video, then it can be treated as an aberration—a tragedy, to be sure, but of no more strategic importance than the cartoon riots. That would have allowed them to keep calling the Libyan intervention a success, albeit a messy success, one strategic victory to balance the ledger against an otherwise unrelenting record of retreat and failure.