

Senate: 'Benghazi Could Have Been Prevented'

The deadly 2012 attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, could have been prevented, according to a recent finding by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The committee blames the State Department and security agencies for not preventing the attack that killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stephens.

The report reveals there were no protests prior to the attacks as the White House first claimed. At least 60 attackers penetrated the consulate and five extremist groups took part—all had ties to al-Qaida.

The report is highly critical of the State Department, run by Hillary Clinton at the time. In response, Clinton's spokesperson referred all questions to the State Department, which disputed the conclusion that the attack could have been prevented.

"We've talked at length about the fact that we knew there were extremists and terrorists operating in Libya and in Benghazi. But again, we had no specific information indicating a threat, an attack was coming," State Department Deputy Spokesperson Marie Harf told the Senate committee.

But others say the threat was clear.

"In spite of the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi and ample strategic warnings, the United States government simply did not do enough to prevent these attacks and ensure the safety of those serving in Benghazi," Sen. Saxby Chambliss, R-Ga., said in a statement.

The report also points to a decision by Ambassador Stevens

that preceded the attack. The State Department had ended a deal with the military to have a special operations team provide extra security. Stevens refused an offer to reinstate the team in the weeks before the terrorists struck.

The Senate panel is making 18 recommendations to improve security at other diplomatic and intelligence posts overseas.

Sen. Chambliss also said he hopes the intelligence community, the State Department, and military will review the bipartisan report and move quickly to adopt its suggestions.