



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on September 13, 2012

Intervention in Libya Led to Attack on U.S. Consulate, Ex-CIA Chief Says

The UN-sanctioned military intervention in Libya by the United States and NATO allies created conditions ripe for Tuesday's attack on the U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, that claimed the life of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other members of his staff, a former CIA director said Wednesday. In an interview with [Newsmax TV](#), retired Air Force General Michael Hayden said the decision to intervene on behalf of the rebels seeking to overthrow Libyan ruler Moammar Gadhafi may have been made without a "deep and true" appreciation of all the consequences, and has left the United States with a "moral responsibility" for the future of Libya.



"Here's a case where we went into Libya for reasons that seemed very powerful for some people at the time, almost all of them humanitarian, perhaps without a true or deep appreciation for what the secondary and tertiary effects of overthrowing Gadhafi would be," said Hayden. "This was always the story we saw in those cell phone videos of oppressed and oppressor, but there were other stories going on too, other narratives — East vs. West in Libya, tribal disputes in Libya, eastern Libya being home of the Islamic Libyan fighting group." Policymakers in the West failed to heed the "subplots" in the Libyan drama, he said.

"All these subplots were always out there and once you shatter the old society, these subplots become far more powerful and now we are seeing the results of that: Loss of control, portable air missiles, weapons from Libya being used to grab the northern half of Mali away from the Malian government, which is a good friend of the U.S.," he said.

Hayden, 67, was on active duty as a four-star general when President George W. Bush chose him to head the CIA in May 2006. He served in that post until February 2009, at the beginning of the Obama administration. He is now a principal of The Chertoff Group, a business consulting company founded by former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. Both Chertoff and Hayden have served as foreign policy advisors to Republican Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. Hayden is also on the advisory board of the Langley Intelligence Group Network (Lignet.com), an online news service that is part of the conservative NewsMax Media group. The retired general, who was head of the CIA during part of the Iraq War, said the crisis in Libya is a reminder of the cautionary words of Army General Colin Powell, then secretary of state, when President Bush was planning the campaign in Iraq.

"I'm reminded of Secretary of State Powell's comments about Iraq going back almost a decade — the Pottery Barn theory that if you break it you own it," Hayden said. The United States was part of a coalition of NATO members and some Arab nations that acted under the authority of a UN Security



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Council resolution. The coalition provided air strikes in support of Libyan rebels who were in danger of being slaughtered by Gadhafi's forces. The United States also provided non-lethal humanitarian aid to the rebels. The intervention has been credited with turning the tide against Gadhafi, leading to his overthrow and assassination later in the year. Hayden believes the United States is left with a "moral responsibility" for what happens in that nation.

"Now you've got a state, a heavily armed state in Libya that is armed at the militia and tribal level," he said. "I actually said when we first intervened that we now take on a moral responsibility for the future of the Libyan state and here we are." Hayden also faulted the United Nations for misrepresenting the mission. "The U.N. Security Council resolution on Libya was bait and switch," he said. "It was never just humanitarian assistance, it was to overthrow the regime."

Anti-American demonstrations took place Tuesday both in Libya and in [Egypt](#), where an Islamic uprising drove President Hosni Mubarak from power last year. The immediate cause of the demonstrations was reportedly a film that depicts the prophet Mohammed as a fraud and portrays him having sex and calling for massacres. A trailer for the film appeared on YouTube, causing an uproar among Muslims, who regard any depiction of Mohammed as a grave offense.

In Egypt, demonstrators scaled the wall of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and tore down the American flag. They raised a black banner bearing the Muslim declaration, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet."

The American-made movie entitled *The Innocence of Muslims* is being promoted by Terry Jones, the minister in Gainesville, Florida, whose burning of the Koran sparked violent demonstrations in Afghanistan in 2011. Hours before Tuesday's demonstration in Egypt and the attack in Libya, the U.S. embassy in Cairo had issued a statement condemning the "continuing efforts by misguided individuals to hurt the religious feelings of Muslims.... We firmly reject the actions by those who abuse the universal right of free speech to hurt the religious beliefs of others." Candidate Romney [condemned](#) the statement as "akin to an apology" and a "severe miscalculation," drawing in return a sharp rebuttal from President Obama.

"Governor Romney seems to have a tendency to shoot first and aim later," Obama said in an interview for the CBS program *60 Minutes*. In response to the attack in Benghazi, Obama issued a televised statement from the White House, promising retribution. "Make no mistake, we will work with the Libyan government to bring to justice the killers who attacked our people," he said.

President Obama ordered the military intervention in Libya in March 2011 without seeking or receiving authorization from Congress, and continued the military actions beyond the 60-days established in the War Powers Act as the length of time a president may carry on a military mission without congressional approval. The White House issued a statement in June of that year, saying the War Powers Act did not apply. "U.S. operations do not involve sustained fighting or active exchanges of fire with hostile forces, nor do they involve U.S. ground troops," the statement said. The Obama administration acknowledged at that time the operation had cost \$716 million in its first two months and would cost an estimate \$1.1 billion by September of 2011.

Apparently, Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, assigning to Congress the power to declare war, did not apply to U.S. military actions either. Congress has not issued a formal declaration of war since 1941, despite multi-year wars since then in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Photo of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens: AP Images





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