



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on August 7, 2013

Mainstream Media on Benghazi: It Was About Gun-running

The mainstream media in the United States have increasingly come to the conclusion that the Benghazi attacks were related to a secret gun-running operation managed by the U.S. government to ferry weapons that had been used by Libyan rebels to Syria. Establishment media outlets reporting on the reputed CIA gun-running operation over the past week included Fox News' [Geraldo Rivera](#), London's *Daily Telegraph* [newspaper](#), and [CNN television](#). *The New American* reported the same likely theory back in [October](#) and [December](#) 2012.



The September 11, 2012 terrorist attacks against the U.S. government compound in Benghazi in Libya resulted in the death of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans.

Stevens was officially on a diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, though it has become abundantly clear that the U.S. "Special Mission Compound" building had more to do with the CIA than diplomacy. The idea that Stevens could have been involved in redirecting arms from Libya to Syria is hardly a stretch. He had the perfect résumé for gun-running, as he had helped manage gun-running to the Libyan rebels during the insurgency against former dictator Moammar Gadhafi. The White House [named](#) Stevens liaison to the Libyan rebels in March 2011, months before Gadhafi's August 2011 ouster.

The August 1 CNN [story](#) on Benghazi mentioned above reported the gun-running story only as "speculation," but CNN charged that there were "dozens of CIA operatives on the ground during the Benghazi attack," and that "the CIA is involved in what one source calls an unprecedented attempt to keep the spy agency's Benghazi secrets from ever leaking out." These attempts include "frequent, even monthly polygraph examinations, according to a source with deep inside knowledge of the agency's workings," in an attempt to intimidate witnesses who may be called before congressional investigators.

The CIA has responded to the CNN story with denials that it is trying to quash whistleblowers. "CIA employees are always free to speak to Congress if they want," a CIA statement to the August 2 London *Telegraph* [claimed](#). "The CIA enabled all officers involved in Benghazi the opportunity to meet with Congress. We are not aware of any CIA employee who has experienced retaliation, including any non-routine security procedures, or who has been prevented from sharing a concern with Congress about the Benghazi incident."

Of course, the same cannot be said of State Department employees. State Department officer Gregory Hicks told congressional investigators, in the [words](#) of the *New York Times*, that he "was later 'effectively demoted' to desk officer at headquarters, in what he believes was retaliation for speaking up" to congressional investigators.

The most significant impact of the revelations of the gun-running operations lies in the fact that gun-



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running to oust a foreign government is an act of war, and the gun-running had not been authorized by Congress (which has the [exclusive power over war under Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution](#)).

Almost as important as the constitutional violations is that revelations of a gun-running operation would put the lie to the Obama administration's reports on Benghazi. A petulant [December 2012 report](#) by the U.S. State Department's Accountability Review Board (under then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton) investigating Benghazi put all the blame on Congress for the deaths: "One overall conclusion in this report is that Congress must do its part to meet this challenge and provide necessary resources to the State Department to address security risks and meet mission imperatives." The report also [concluded](#) that "the Board did not find that any individual U.S. Government employee engaged in misconduct or willfully ignored his or her responsibilities, and, therefore did not find reasonable cause to believe that an individual breached his or her duty so as to be the subject of a recommendation for disciplinary action."

The Accountability Review Board [report](#) didn't touch on anything resembling an alleged gun-running operation other than a passing reference that Ambassador Stevens was in Benghazi to meet with an unnamed "Turkish diplomat" on an undisclosed topic. The gun-running story — as originally reported in both *The New American* and Fox News back in October — involved the distribution of Libyan guns to Syria through Turkey, which borders Syria.

According to Fox News Channel back on October 25, 2012:

"Through shipping records, Fox News has confirmed that the Libyan-flagged vessel Al Entisar, which means 'The Victory,' was received in the Turkish port of Iskenderun — 35 miles from the Syrian border — on Sept. 6, just five days before Ambassador Chris Stevens, information management officer Sean Smith and former Navy SEALs Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty were killed during an extended assault by more than 100 Islamist militants." Arms being sent to Syria reportedly included Libyan-owned, Russian-made anti-aircraft weapons called MANPADS.

That same Fox News [story](#) also noted that the Turkish-based charity that chartered the ship denied it had been involved in gun-running. According to Fox News, the Foundation for Human Rights, and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) in published Turkish reports said it "will take legal action against this article which was written without concrete evidence. It is defamatory, includes false and unfair accusations and violates publishing ethics."

Gun-running revelations would also cast the CIA talking points memo scandal in a completely different light.

A September 14 draft CIA memo on Benghazi noted: "The Agency has produced numerous pieces on the threat of extremists linked to al-Qaeda in Benghazi and eastern Libya. Since April, there have been at least five other attacks against foreign interests in Benghazi by unidentified assailants, including the June attack against the British Ambassador's convoy. We cannot rule out that individuals had previously surveilled the US facilities, also contributing to the efficacy of the attacks." This reference was deleted before the final version was released, and the White House [stressed](#): "The currently available information suggests that the demonstrations in Benghazi were spontaneously inspired by the protests at the US Embassy in Cairo and evolved into a direct assault against the US Consulate and subsequently its annex."

Benghazi wasn't the first time unauthorized gun-running schemes initiated by the Obama administration have cost American lives. Indeed, the Obama administration — though it has publicly



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attacked America's gun laws for American civilians as not restrictive enough — has a long history of gun-running. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (still known as ATF) gave some 2,000 high-powered weapons to Mexican-based drug cartels in 2009 and then lost track of the guns. The death toll from weapons used in the ATF program (dubbed "Fast and Furious"), [according to the Dallas Morning News](#), is "more than 200 deaths to Fast and Furious weapons," and it is continuing to rise. Among the dead was U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

Former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul [noticed](#) this pattern back in May: "The Islamic radicals who attacked Benghazi were the same people let loose by the US-led attack on Libya. They were the rebels on whose behalf the US overthrew the Libyan government. Ambassador Stevens was slain by the same Islamic radicals he personally assisted just over one year earlier." The former congressman added: "The real lesson of Benghazi will not be learned because neither Republicans nor Democrats want to hear it. But it is our interventionist foreign policy and its unintended consequences that have created these problems, including the attack and murder of Ambassador Stevens. The disputed talking points and White House whitewashing are just a sideshow."

Photo of gunmen in Benghazi, Libya: AP Images



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