

RELEASE IN FULL

LIBYA NARRATIVES and MAJOR STORIES – Friday, October 19, 2012

(covering updates from 0700 10/18 to 0600 10/19)

Summary of Selected Major Stories

- **Obama, on the Daily Show, addresses attack in Libya; denies confusion in Administration** [NYT, WSJ and AFP, October 18]
 - In interview that departs from his language in the second debate, Obama acknowledges “screw-up,” but vows an investigation to fix it.
 - President Obama: “We weren’t confused about the fact that four Americans had been killed. I wasn’t confused about the fact that we needed to ramp up diplomatic security. I wasn’t confused about the fact that we had to investigate...And I wasn’t confused about the fact that we’re going to hunt down whoever did it.”
- **Libyan militia leader and prime suspect – Ahmed Abu Khattala – says he was at Benghazi consulate but denies role in attack** [Reuters, AP and NYT, October 18]
 - He also says he is not in hiding and while not linked to al-Qaeda, he thinks highly of bin Laden.
- **Douglas Feith and Seth Corpsey Op-Ed in WSJ: A Foreign Policy Failure to Acknowledge the Obvious** [WSJ, October 19 print]
 - The Administration’s first response – to blame the film – reflected strategic misjudgments.
 - The Administration misdiagnoses terrorism and extremism: (a) it refuses to accept that terrorism is a part of Islamic extremism and (b) it believes terrorism is spawned by grievances about social and economic problems, not religious fanaticism.
- **Charles Krauthammer Op-Ed in WaPo: Obama’s comment in debate that he was offended by accusations he misled is a “great gaffe”** [WaPo, October 18]

Updates to Ongoing Narratives

- **Security and Requests Before Attack:** No major updates.
- **Tick-Tock Night Of:** As Abu Khattala granted interviews and discussed the night of the attack, there is some coverage, once again, on what spurred the attack. He says the attack grew out of peaceful protests against the anti-Islam film, that he went to the consulate to help rescue people reportedly trapped inside, and that guards inside the compound had shot first, provoking the protestors.
- **Congressional Issues / Partisanship:** There are no new major updates to Congressional narratives besides two isolated quotes. Sen. Feinstein asserted that an intelligence mistake

and inadequate security is to blame and Rep. Chaffetz said Abu Khattala's explanation to the press that he was at the consulate but not participating in the attack "sounds fishy."

- **Stonewalling / Cover-Up / Shifting Explanations:** In the Daily Show, the President pushed back on the narrative that the Administration, and particularly Amb. Rice, misled the public. He is quoted repeatedly as saying "Every piece of information that we get, as we got it, we laid it out to the American people...The picture eventually gets fully filled in."
- **Responsibility:** For the first time in several days, there is no new coverage stemming from the Secretary's and the President's admission of responsibility.
- **Interagency Issues:** One of the President's quotes from the Daily Show that was picked up in a handful of articles is interpreted as his defense of the perceived interagency disconnect: "The government is a big operation and in any given time, something screws up."
- **Preventing Attacks in the Future** A high focus of the President's interview on the Daily Show was the forward narrative that "We're going to fix it. All of it." He also asserted that after the attack, he knew we needed to ramp up diplomatic security and investigate.