

Management Officer in the State Department. He was posted at the Hague, and was in Libya on a brief temporary assignment. He was a husband to a wonderful wife, Heather, with whom I spoke this morning. He was a father to two young children, Samantha and Nathan. They will grow up being proud of the service their father gave to our country – service that took him from Pretoria to Baghdad and finally to Benghazi.

The mission that drew Chris and Sean and their colleagues to Libya is both noble and necessary. And we and the people of Libya honor their memory by carrying it forward. This is not easy. Today, many Americans are asking—indeed, I asked myself—how could this happen? How could this happen in a country we helped liberate, in a city we helped save from destruction?

This question reflects just how complicated—and at times, how confounding—the world can be. But we must be clear-eyed, even in grief.

This was an attack by a small and savage group, not the people or government of Libya. Everywhere Chris and his team went in this country scarred by war and tyranny, they were hailed as friends and partners. And when the attack came, Libyans stood and fought to defend our post. Some were wounded. Libyans carried Chris's body to the hospital, and they helped other Americans reach safety.

And last night, when I spoke with the President of Libya, he strongly condemned the violence and pledged every effort to protect our people and pursue those responsible. The friendship between our countries, born out of shared struggle, will not be another casualty of this attack. A free and stable Libya is still in America's interest. And we will not turn our back on that.

Nor will we rest until those responsible for these attacks are found and brought to justice. We are working closely with the Libyan authorities to move swiftly and surely. We are also working with partners around the world to safeguard other American embassies, consulates, and citizens. There will be more time later to reflect—but today, we have work to do. There is no higher priority than protecting our men and women, wherever they serve.

We are working to determine the precise motivations and methods of those who carried out this assault. Some have sought to justify this vicious

behavior, along with the protest that took place at our embassy in Cairo yesterday, as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear: There is no justification for this. None. Violence like this is no way to honor religion or faith. And as long as there are those who would take innocent life in the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace.

It is especially difficult that this happened on September 11th. It's an anniversary that means a great deal to all Americans. Every year on that day, we are reminded that our work is not yet finished—that the job of putting an end to violent extremism and building a safe and stable world continues. But September 11th means even more than that. It is a day on which we remember thousands of American heroes... the bonds that connect all Americans, wherever we are on earth... and the values that see us through every storm. And now, it is a day on which we remember Sean, Chris, and their colleagues.

May God bless them. May God bless the thousands of Americans working in every corner of the world, who make this country the greatest force for peace, prosperity and human dignity the world has ever known. And may God bless the United States of America.

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