

RELEASE IN PART
B6

Subject: Fwd: REVISED Key points

From: Cheryl Mills [redacted]

Date: 9/29/12, 1:18 PM

To: Jake Sullivan [redacted], Philippe Reines [redacted]

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My suggested thoughts:

John:

I look forward to sitting down so we can have our own conversation about what we know at the moment. I know you were frustrated at the briefing -- our hands were tied in that setting. As Lindsey might have told you, I ended up staying for nearly two hours answering questions.

It's important we see each other in person to talk about this in our usual informal but direct manner, so over the phone today I just wanted to share a few quick thoughts.

First, we have been taking this extremely seriously, as we should. I stood up the ARB quickly, with serious people on it like Tom Pickering and Mike Mullen. I want to make sure we get to the bottom of any and all of the security questions. I know the FBI and others are working overtime to track down the killers. We have to get this right. This is very personal for me -- I put Chris in Benghazi originally and then made him our Ambassador; it matters to me on every level. Not to mention my responsibility to protect the more than 60,000 diplomats we have around the world. You have traveled just about more than any member of Congress. You know as well as I do how dedicated they are, and how vital what they are doing is, often in harm's way.

Second, I hope you know that the White House and Susan were acting in good faith and only repeating what they had been told, very emphatically I might add, by the IC at that time. I know because they said the same thing to all of us.

The real story may have been obvious to you from the start -- it seemed like an assault by heavily armed militants, which is what I said publicly from the outset -- but the IC gave very different information based upon what they were seeing at the time. And they were unanimous about it.

In fact, I had my team pull the guidance that was circulated by a very senior official at the CIA for everyone's use, including counterparts at DNI, NCTC, and FBI. This guidance wasn't prepared for Susan. The IC prepared the talking points for their own use before HPSCI in the days after the attack. Those points were then approved by the IC for public use and provided to Susan for that purpose. She did not say one word differently than the IC generated guidance.

The IC's assessment and guidance to Susan evolved over the following days, and ultimately turned out to be wrong. But when Susan spoke, she was speaking in good faith.

Third, you have to remember that the video WAS important. We had four embassies breached because of protests inspired by it - Cairo, Tunis, Khartoum, and Sanaa. We had serious security challenges in Pakistan and Chennai and some other places. All this was happening at the same time. So many of the contemporaneous comments about the video weren't referring in any way to Benghazi. Now of course even in those countries it was about much much more than the video, but the video was certainly a piece of it - one we felt we had to speak to so that our allies in those countries would back us up.

I know that we are going to keep learning more each day. I do not need to explain anything to you anything about the Fog of War. That fog has not fully lifted. We are still asking hard questions and looking for answers.

But it will be great to get together -- to get your thoughts and your advice as well.

On Sat, Sep 29, 2012 at 11:49 AM, Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov> wrote:

JJS-DOS-0000036

----- Original Message -----

From: Sullivan, Jacob J
Sent: Saturday, September 29, 2012 11:09 AM
To: 'hdr22@clintonemail.com' <hdr22@clintonemail.com>
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Key points

HRC, Cheryl -

Below is my stab at tp's for the Senator call. Cheryl, I've left the last point blank for you. These are rough but you get the point.

I look forward to sitting down and having a Hillary-to-John conversation about what we know. I know you were frustrated by the briefing we did and I'm sorry our hands were tied in that setting.

It's important we see each other in person, but over the phone today I just wanted to make a few points.

First, we have been taking this deadly seriously, as we should. I set up the ARB in record time, with serious people on it. I will get to the bottom of all the security questions. We are also in overdrive working to track down the killers, and not just through the FBI. We will get this right.

Second, the White House and Susan were not making things up. They were going with what they were told by the IC.

The real story may have been obvious to you from the start (and indeed I called it an assault by heavily armed militants in my first statement), but the IC gave us very different information. They were unanimous about it.

Let me read you an email from the day before Susan went on the shows. It provides the talking points for HPSCI and for her public appearance. It's from a very senior official at CIA, copying his counterparts at DNI, NCTC, and FBI:

Here are the talking points...

--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. There are indications that extremists participated in the violent demonstrations.

--This assessment may change as additional information is collected and analyzed and as currently available information continues to be evaluated.

--The investigation is on-going, and the US Government is working with Libyan authorities to bring to justice those responsible for the deaths US citizens.

That is exactly what Susan said, following the guidance from the IC. She obviously got bad advice. But she was not shading the truth.

Third, you have to remember that the video WAS important. We had four embassies breached because of protests inspired by it - Cairo, Tunis, Khartoum, and Sanaa. We had serious security challenges in Pakistan and Chennai and some other places. All this was happening at the same time. So many of the contemporaneous comments about the video weren't referring in any way to Benghazi. Now of course even in those countries it was about much much more than the video, but the video was certainly a piece of it - one we felt we had to speak to so that our allies in those countries would back us up.

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Fourth, this CNN diary drama has not been helpful in laying out the facts. (CHERYL can help you here in establishing what the diary actually says.)

JJS-005-0000038