

# Former Acting CIA Director Denies Iranian Involvement in Benghazi

by Kenneth R. Timmerman (October 2014)

In a September 19 speech in Florida, for which he was paid the princely sum of \$22,000, former CIA Acting Director Mike Morell doubled down on the administration's fairy tale of what happened in Benghazi.

Two former U.S. intelligence officers had crafted a question for Morell about the Iranian and Hezbollah involvement in the September 11, 2012 Benghazi attacks. They wanted to make sure he could answer truthfully, without divulging classified matters.

"Was the CIA aware of the Iranian and Hezbollah involvement in Benghazi during the uprising against Qaddafi, and later, in the lead-up to the attacks on Sept 11-12, 2012?" they asked. "Was the CIA aware of the arrival on July 31, 2012 of a 7-man team of so-called Iranian Red Crescent workers in Benghazi?"

Morell could have made a general comment to the effect that the U.S. has been concerned for years with Iran's aggressive intelligence presence in many parts of the world. He might have mentioned Iran's eagerness to kill Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq, or their reckless attempt in 2011 to kill the Saudi ambassador in Washington, DC by blowing up a tony restaurant in our nation's capitol.

There were many ways Morell could have answered that question truthfully, even artfully, without getting into classified matters or jeopardizing the ongoing nuclear talks with Iran, which the Obama administration is determined to protect.

Instead, he chose a flat-out lie.

Here's what he said, word for word, from an audiotape of his presentation before the Tiger Bay Club in Pensacola:

"[Long pause] So. There were no Iranian operatives in Benghazi. There were no Hezbollah operatives in Benghazi. I can tell you that with great, great certainty. The people who showed up at the State Department facility that night were a mixture of folks who just

wanted to cause trouble, folks who just wanted to have a good time, and Islamic extremists.”

The presence of Iranian and Hezbollah operatives in Benghazi since early 2011 was well known to the CIA, which had been reporting on their activities on a regular basis. It was also well known to U.S. military contractors in Benghazi, from whom I first learned about it in March 2011.

Iran’s hostile intelligence presence was known to Ambassador Stevens, who was present at a briefing by the embassy’s Emergency Action Committee in June 2012 where the CIA Chief of Station made a Powerpoint presentation on Iran’s ongoing efforts to move men and money to Benghazi.

It was also known to the local Libyan media, which published pictures of the seven-man team of Iranian Red Crescent workers that arrived in Benghazi on July 30, 2012, and was “kidnapped” that night by an Islamist group that appears to have been on the Iranian payroll. (It is no state secret that the Red Crescent society, the Muslim counterpart to the Red Cross, has been used repeatedly by terrorists in Gaza, the West Bank, Somalia and Sudan for operations having nothing to do with its humanitarian charter.)



The Iranian “Red Crescent” team that was mysteriously “kidnapped” on July 31, 2012.

I have posted more photographs of the “missing” Iranian Red Crescent workers at the on-line reader’s guide for my latest book, *Dark Forces: The Truth About What Happened in Benghazi*: <http://kentimmerman.com/darkforces-guide.htm>

But Morell was not content to leave it there, with his stunning affirmative denial that Iranian and Hezbollah operatives were present in Benghazi.

Instead, he went on to present a detailed – and totally false – picture of a bunch of goofballs out for a Friday night prank who accidentally killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and his communications officer, Sean Smith.

“It was a mixture,” Morell went on. “And if you watched the video, if you watched the video of what played out that night at that compound, what you will see is not an organized military assault. You will see a bunch of people come through the front gate. You see them spread out over the compound. You will see them run by buildings. You will see them not looking for Americans. You will see them trying to break down doors in a

comedic fashion, literally, Three Stooges style. Some doors they get in. Some doors they try a couple of times and give up. When they go into a building where there are Americans they don't find them because they aren't looking for them. They run out of the buildings with suits, Xboxes, all sorts of things like that. They set fires to buildings and that's how the ambassador and one of his security officers died. But there's no absolutely no evidence that they set those fires to kill the Ambassador and his security officer."<sup>1</sup>

Now, nobody thinks the Iranians were dumb enough to strut in front of the security cameras. But as I disclose in *Dark Forces*, they were conducting surveillance and managing the overall operation, including the deliberate arson, from a building across the street that overlooked the compound.

They helped create the Ansar al-Sharia militia, and funded it from the get-go from accounts controlled by the Quds Force, the overseas terrorist apparatus of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the IRGC.

Morell went on to claim, against all evidence, that the organized jihadis who broke through the front gate and advanced "using silent military handsignals," according to eyewitness accounts, had been spontaneously inspired by watching videos of protests at the U.S. embassy in Cairo earlier that day.

"And what happened in Cairo a few hours earlier was that there was a large protest and the protestors got over the fence and did a lot of vandalism, burned some vehicles at the embassy, and the folks in Benghazi saw that and said, hey, let's do the same thing. That's why it wasn't organized, and that's why there were large groups of different kinds of folks," Morell said.

Actually, what happened in Cairo was also an organized assault, sparked by calls two days earlier over Facebook and other Social media from the brother of al Qaeda leader Ayman al Zawahri for jihadi groups to storm the embassy and kill every American inside. Videos of their assault showed them scaling the embassy walls, taking down the Stars and Stripes, and hoisting the black flag of al Qaeda in its place.

Morell blamed Governor Mitt Romney and House Republicans for "politicizing" Benghazi, and for "trying to use this to do whatever they can to undermine Hillary Clinton's chances in 2016."

In a phony effort at even-handedness, he also fired a weak shot at White House communications director Ben Rhodes for politicizing the talking points given to Susan Rice for the Sunday

talk shows, while conveniently omitting any mention of his own role in the editing process.

Senator Lindsay Graham tells me that the CIA had to hastily apologize to him after Morell, in a conversation in Graham's office on Nov. 27, 2012, blamed the FBI for deleting all mention of al Qaeda in the talking points. Morell claimed the FBI sought to protect an "ongoing criminal investigation," something the FBI told Sen. Graham was not true. After the FBI complained about Morell's lie, Graham says he received an apologetic phone call from the CIA, saying that Morell "misspoke" in his meeting with Graham.

"If the truth had been known that al Qaeda killed four Americans seven weeks before an election, it would have been a different political story," Graham told me. "That's why they changed the talking points."

Since leaving the CIA, Morell has been richly rewarded for his services by his political masters. He was picked up almost immediately by Beacon Global Strategies, a consulting firm set up by Hillary Clinton's chief enforcer, Philippe Reines, and other Clinton insiders.

Also joining the firm was Mike Allen, the former Republican chief of staff of the House intelligence committee. (Allen took flak for meeting with Beacon recruiters while still working for committee chair Rep. Mike Rogers as the committee's own Benghazi probe was ongoing).

For years, the CIA has sought to downplay the threat from Iran, and in particular, Iran's involvement in international terrorism. They withheld documents from the 9/11 Commission detailing Iran's involvement in the 2001 attacks on America, and tried to deny Iran's cooperation with al Qaeda. Finally, in December 2011, a federal District court judge cut through the subterfuge and found that Iran shared material responsibility for the attacks with al Qaeda, and awarded families of the 9/11 victims a \$6 billion liability judgment against Iran. (Disclosure: I was hired by the attorneys in this case as an outside investigator to develop the evidence against Iran). <http://www.iran911case.com/>

Morell was given a pass by the audience in Pensacola, Florida. But after an account of his speech began circulating by email – and presumably, back to Morell – he sent his booking agent scurrying to the Tiger Bay club organizers to demand that they prevent any further mention of his remarks in public.

Rep. Trey Gowdy needs to haul Morell into the hearing room, swear him in, and confront him with hostile witnesses for however long it takes, to get him to acknowledge the truth about what happened in Benghazi. He owes at least that much to the families of the four men who

perished unnecessarily that night, and to the American people.

1) Sean Smith was a State Department communications officer, not a security officer.

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