

Phase 5 Individual Project

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Phase 3 Individual Project

Introduction

Risk Assessment

By definition a risk assessment is a calculated evaluation in a particular action or environment (Brown & Cox, 2011). With this in mind, the Benghazi attack on September 11th, 2012 and the results of the destruction of the mission buildings (not to overlook the deaths) had been assessed by normal Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) personnel before September 11th, 2012. They included several diplomatic cables that the security situation in Libya was deteriorating and that US facilities and personnel were in danger (Stone, 2014). Of course we must take into consideration that there was also a CIA Annex (two kilometers away) and very close to the mission. "Although officially under cover, the Annex was known by some in Benghazi as an American facility." (Senate Review, Jan 15, 2014, p. 7). Although normally a CIA risk assessment may not include the mission building security themselves, it is quite clear that the CIA's "...security cameras were both installed and operating on the day of the attacks" (Stone, 2014). Also, there were several surveillance cameras at the mission, but they were not installed because the State Department had not yet sent a technical team to install them (Stone, 2014). Risk assessments were performed before the attacks based on Ambassador Stevens continual diary entries of "...Never ending security threats" (Stone, 2014). Moreover, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) stated that "...diplomacy and intelligence collection are inherently risky, and that all risk cannot be eliminated." (Senate Review, Jan 15, 2014).

Brief Background

“At approximately 9:40p.m. Benghazi time, on September 11, 2012, dozens of attackers easily gained access to the U.S. Temporary Mission Facility (hereinafter "the TMF," "the Mission facility," or "the Mission compound") by scaling and then opening the front vehicle gate. Over the course of the entire attack on the TMF, at least 60 different attackers entered the U.S. compound and can be seen on the surveillance video recovered from the Mission facility. The attackers moved unimpeded throughout the compound, entering and exiting buildings at will. After entering the Mission facility, the attackers used diesel fuel to set fire to the barracks/guard house of the Libyan 17th February Brigade militia, which served as a security force provided by the host nation for the Mission compound, and then proceeded towards the main buildings of the compound (Senate Review, January 15, 2014).

“Attackers used arson, small arms, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars against the U.S. Special Mission, a Mission annex, and U.S. personnel en route between both facilities, killing the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other U.S. government personnel, wounding two U.S. personnel and three Libyan contract guards, and destroying both facilities.” (US Bureau of Diplomatic Security Services, 2013).

Key Players

- Ambassador Stevens (deceased)
- Diplomatic Services personnel
- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
- President Barack Obama

- Information Management Officer Sean Smith (deceased)

Organizations

- US State Department
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
- Diplomatic Security Services
- Libyan Military

Problem Statement

The attack on the U.S. Temporary Mission Facility on September 11, 2012 at Benghazi may have been minimized with a more understanding of the risks associated with having the mission in Libya and a quicker response by State Department personnel on securing more protection for the facility.

Initial Research Questions:

1. What was the policy for having an ambassador at a temporary mission facility(TMF)?
2. What were the CIA facility responsibilities before and after the attack.
3. Why did it take so long to get the security cameras installed and tested at the TMF?
4. What policies dictate setting up a TMF by the State Department.
5. Was the Secretary of State aware of the request for more security at the TMF.
6. Why didn't the Libyan government act quicker and inform the TMF personnel of the dangers?
7. What State Department group conducts risks assessments.
8. What policies and processes are in place by the Diplomatic Security Services concerning risks?

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Activity being Studied:

- The Benghazi attacks in Libya
- Security of Mission personnel

Policies being Studied:

- Risk Assessments
- US State Department's policies on facility security enhancements of Middle Eastern

Missions

There were two missions located in Libya during the time of the attacks. The US Consulate. Their mission was to have a US presence in Libya after the downfall of Muammar Gaddafi. Additional diplomatic mission security features were added since 1983 after the bombing in Beirut, Lebanon; this included most US facilities that were deemed similarly challenged and to realistically represent American philosophy on foreign soil in the Middle East (Johnson, 2013).

The second mission was the CIA compound located very close to the diplomatic mission. Not very long after the attack the US sent spies, Marines and even drones to help find the killers and the "investigation [was made even more] complicated by a chaotic security picture in the post-revolutionary country and [with] limited American and Libyan intelligence resources." (Dozier, 2012).

Current Security Policies:

1. The US Bureau Diplomatic Security Services (DSS) is answerable to provide a protected and secure environment for the carrying out of U.S. foreign policy. All diplomatic undertakings in the world operate under a security program designed and

maintained by DSS. Those security policies and programs are classified and not for public release.

2. The Assistant Secretary of State oversees Department of State security programs (classified) to protect U.S. Government human resources and facilities under the chief of mission authority overseas from terrorist, illegal, or technological attacks, and ensures the truthfulness of classified national security information produced and stored in these facilities (US Department of State, 2014).

General Current Political Policies:

The current US State Department political policy states: “To shape and sustain a peaceful, prosperous, just, and democratic world and foster conditions for stability and progress for the benefit of the American people and people everywhere”. (US Department of State, 2013)

Project Questions:

1. What was the current security and political policy that affected or influenced the activity?
2. What is wrong with the policy and why?
3. What is right about the policy and why?
4. What is your recommendation for a policy change or adjustment to better respond to this case study situation?

Conclusion

The United States Department of State under the direction of Hillary Clinton is directly responsible for the deaths of those individuals at the Benghazi mission in Libya. The research articles and the media accounts give evidence that the mission personnel, including Ambassador Stevens, requested security assistance way before the attacks. Intelligence reports (public) stated several times that there was a high probability that an attack would occur. The CIA compound near the mission was the reason for the attack. After the British Ambassador was attacked weeks before (Burton & Katz, 2013), the US mission personnel asked for more security cameras and materials be purchased and installed. The lack of coordination and time-to-install the equipment only added to the risks.

Since embassies and diplomatic missions are increasingly viewed as symbols instead of delegation outposts, it may be time to question their usefulness as ambassadorial tools in an international plagued terrorist society (Johnson, 2013). "Libyan security personnel fought back against the attackers alongside Americans" (Embassy, U. S. 2013b). The reports of this happening may be in question (Burton & Katz, 2013).

A risk assessment on the mission in Benghazi would have followed normal protocols and policies. It is assumed that one was taken. A State Department risk assessment takes into consideration the location, history of the country, history of the relationship between the country and the United States, how the country views American diplomacy in the Middle East, and the relationships that the US has with other countries in the region (Rausand, 2013).

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