



Benghazi Whistleblowers Allegedly Threatened by Obama Administration

According to Fox News, four officials at the State Department and the CIA who are preparing to provide sensitive information to Congress about the attacks last September 11 on two U.S. diplomatic compounds in Benghazi, Libya, have now retained lawyers as they are being [threatened](#) by members of the Obama administration. The attacks killed four Americans, including Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. Ten others were injured.



A lawyer for one of the whistleblowers is Victoria Toensing, a former Justice Department official and Republican counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee. She stated in an interview Monday, "I'm not talking generally, I'm talking specifically about Benghazi — that people have been threatened. And not just [officials in] the State Department. People have been threatened at the CIA."

Fox News [reports](#):

Toensing disclosed that her [unnamed] client has pertinent information on all three time periods investigators consider relevant to the attacks: the months that led up to the attack, when pleas by the ambassador and his staff for enhanced security in Benghazi were mostly rejected by senior officers at the State Department; the eight-hour time frame in which the attacks unfolded, and the eight-day period that followed the attacks, when Obama administration officials incorrectly described them as the result of a spontaneous protest over a video.

"It's frightening, and they're doing some very despicable threats to people," she said. "Not 'we're going to kill you,' or not 'we're going to prosecute you tomorrow,' but they're taking career people and making them well aware that their careers will be over [if they cooperate with congressional investigators]."

Prior to this revelation, Senator Lindsey Graham had [suggested](#) Obama administration officials were blocking access to the witnesses of the Benghazi attacks and telling them to "keep quiet." The administration quickly dismissed the allegations.

Though a federal law allegedly assures government whistleblowers that there will be no retaliation from their superiors in the event that they provide information to Congress about corruption in their departments, this is not the first time that those brave enough to come forward and reveal wrongdoing have faced repercussions.

For instance, agent Vince Cefalu of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (still known as ATF) was served termination papers after he blew the whistle on the gunwalking scandal of his department known as "Fast and Furious," in which the ATF provided thousands of firearms through straw purchasers to Mexican drug cartels. Peter Forcelli, one of the first to report to a House panel on the controversial operation, has also claimed that after his testimony, he faced retribution. Prosecutors in Arizona "made false accusations in an effort to discredit me," he said, adding that the majority of the



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retaliation came from the U.S. attorney's office in Phoenix.

"I was forced to relocate, and had to [short-sell] my home for a loss of nearly \$200,000," he wrote in an e-mail. He said his wife had to quit her job, but "most hurtful" to him was that his daughter, "who also felt very uncomfortable, was forced to leave" the college that had awarded her a full scholarship worth \$82,000.

And ATF whistleblower Larry Alt contends that he was transferred to an "administrative job" and received a poor work evaluation because he voiced concerns about Fast and Furious. His retaliation claims are still being resolved. "This process ... has taken a personal toll on all of us," he stated.

In fact, assertions that Fast and Furious whistleblowers were facing retribution for their actions prompted the Department of Justice to [create](#) a new "Whistleblower Ombudsman" position allegedly to protect federal employees who reported misconduct within their department, though it is unclear whether the position has proven effective.

As for the officials now preparing to testify regarding the Benghazi attacks, Rep. Darrell Issa, chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, has written a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry complaining that the department has not provided a process for attorneys to receive security clearances necessary to review classified evidence.

"It is unavoidable that Department employees identifying themselves as witnesses in the Committee's investigation will apply for a security clearance to allow their personal attorneys to handle sensitive or classified material," Issa wrote. "The Department's unwillingness to make the process for clearing an attorney more transparent appears to be an effort to interfere with the rights of employees to furnish information to Congress."

The Obama administration has stated that it is time for the State Department to move on from Benghazi. Kerry testified at a recent hearing before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that administration officials have testified at eight hearings on the attacks, provided 20 briefings, and turned over 25,000 related documents, and that they begrudge efforts to investigate further.

"So if you have additional questions or you think there's some document that somehow you need, I'll work with you to try to get it and see if we can provide that to you," Kerry told committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.) on April 17. He added, "I do not want to spend the next year coming up here talking about Benghazi."

Similarly, State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell asserts that his department and the FBI have performed a significant investigation into the Benghazi attacks and have concluded that there is no evidence to indicate that administration officials willfully endangered their colleagues in Benghazi, nor that they misled either the public or Congress.

"And that should be enough," Ventrell said at Monday's press briefing. "Congress has its own prerogatives, but we've had a very thorough, independent investigation, which we completed and [which was] transparent and shared. And there are many folks who are, in a political manner, trying to sort of use this for their own political means, or ends."

However, despite assertions that the administration has provided all the necessary information regarding Benghazi, there is evidence to the contrary.

When CBS News [asked](#) for White House photos from the night of the attacks and the surveillance video that was promised, and answers to outstanding questions, White House officials said there would be no



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further comment. CBS then filed multiple Freedom of Information requests for Benghazi-related material; however, none has been provided. Judicial Watch, which also filed suit against the government to acquire information on Benghazi, has yet to receive any material.

Regardless of efforts by the Obama administration to make Benghazi go away, Republicans in the House have indicated that more hearings are coming, which Rep. Trey Gowdy (R-S.C.) asserts will be “explosive.”



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