

THE LIBYAN LEFT BEHIND NOVELS

I confess I'm skeptical every time a set of documents gets "left behind" in Libya. First there were the intelligence documents showing how the US and UK collaborated in the rendition and torture of Libyan opposition figures. Then there was Ambassador Chris Stevens' journal, in apparently undamaged condition. And now there are the documents a WaPo reporter found at the still unsecured compound.

Documents detailing weapons collection efforts, emergency evacuation protocols, the full internal itinerary of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens's trip and the personnel records of Libyans who were contracted to secure the mission were among the items scattered across the floors of the looted compound when a Washington Post reporter and a translator visited Wednesday.

[snip]

At least one document found amid the clutter indicates that Americans at the mission were discussing the possibility of an attack in early September, just two days before the assault took place. The document is a memorandum dated Sept. 9 from the U.S. mission's security office to the 17th February Martyrs Brigade, the Libyan-government-sanctioned militia that was guarding the compound, making plans for a "quick reaction force," or QRF, that would provide security.

"In the event of an attack on the U.S. Mission," the document states, "QRF will request additional support from the 17th February Martyrs Brigade."

Other the documents detail – with names, photographs, phone numbers and other

personal information – the Libyans contracted to provide security for the mission from a British-based private firm, Blue Mountain. Some of those Libyans say they now fear for their lives, and the State Department has said it shares concerns about their safety.

Not only do I find it a remarkable coinkydink that only in Libya do documents have a way of conveniently appearing. But all the documents in question are documents that address a specifically relevant subject matter at a convenient time. Moreover, given earlier reports that documents showing contacts were looted, I'm doubly skeptical an itinerary of Chris Stevens' meetings would be left lying around, particularly given all the questions about what he was doing in Benghazi. And I'll come back to my thoughts about the Libyan security contractors in a later post.

Ah well. None of that takes away from the laudable work of the reporters that continue to unearth this stuff.

Which brings me to the real question raised by the discovery of these documents. Thus far, at least 3 media teams have spent significant time at the compound.

And yet the FBI haven't shown up for a visit once.

Perhaps that's a factor of the FBI having chased their Arabic Agents out of the Bureau (I haven't heard of similar problems with Agents of North African descent); it'd be a lot easier to at least do a few evidence collection visits if the FBI officers didn't look and sound like Ken and Barbie. But in the WaPo's case, at least, a reporter and a translator made it safely in and out of the compound.

Maybe the FBI can deputize the press to conduct this investigation?