

THE FEBRUARY 17 BRIGADE LIBERATES THE PRISONERS

I've got a half-done post backstage talking about the conflicting evidence regarding the February 17 Brigade's behavior the night of the Benghazi attack. Suffice it to say that, while they had been reliable in the past, and while CIA and State timelines differ about what kind of help they provided the night of the attack, there's a lot of evidence to suggest they had allowed the attack, if not participated themselves.

Thus, it seems another "friendly" force potentially trained by David Petraeus' people turned on the Americans.

But as Josh Gerstein notes, in an update to his post on Paula Broadwell's apparently classified comments on October 26, Fox actually tied the February 17 Brigade to the prisoners at the annex.

Later in her remarks, Broadwell, said some of her information had come from a Fox News report. Fox said Monday that it's "original" Oct. 26 report did mention three Libyan militia members being turned over by the CIA to Libyan authorities. That detail does not appear in the version of the story now posted online, but Fox reporter Jennifer Griffin did include it in at least one report.

"We're also told, those at the CIA annex took into custody three Libyan attackers and were forced to hand them over to the Libyan February 17th forces that came to help at the annex approximately 4:00 in the morning. They handed these three Libyans over. It is not clear from U.S. officials what happened to the libyans and whether those Libyan attackers were

in fact released in the end by the Libyans,” Griffin reported.

Now, this syntax seems to suggest the prisoners were not—as Fox is now reporting—more general detainees, but people tied to the attack taken prisoner. Here’s what Fox currently says.

In the original Oct. 26 Fox News report, sources at the annex said that the CIA’s Global Response Staff had handed over three Libyan militia members to the Libyan authorities who came to rescue the 30 Americans in the early hours of Sept. 12.

A well-placed Washington source confirms to Fox News that there were Libyan militiamen being held at the CIA annex in Benghazi and that their presence was being looked at as a possible motive for the staged attack on the consulate and annex that night.

According to multiple intelligence sources who have served in Benghazi, there were more than just Libyan militia members who were held and interrogated by CIA contractors at the CIA annex in the days prior to the attack. Other prisoners from additional countries in Africa and the Middle East were brought to this location.

The Libya annex was the largest CIA station in North Africa, and two weeks prior to the attack, the CIA was preparing to shut it down. Most prisoners, according to British and American intelligence sources, had been moved two weeks earlier.

As a threshold matter, I want to know why Fox took out that report if now—post-election—they’ve got multiple sources confirming what they took out of their earlier report.

But I also think this really confirms that part of the cover-up here is that the militia that was supposedly friendly—indeed, had been friendly and responsive going back some months—was undermining us in this case.