

# Death in Benghazi, Part II: Will the House Select Committee Find the Truth?

by Jerry Gordon and Mike Bates (July 2014)



Citizens' Commission on Benghazi

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[Dark Forces: The Truth About What Happened in Benghazi](#). We want to continue talking about Benghazi because it is such an important issue so we have joining us for this half hour, Jerry Gordon in the studio with us here in Pensacola and we have joining us by telephone Roger Aronoff who is the Chairman of the Citizens' Commission on Benghazi. Welcome Roger.



**Roger Aronoff:** Thank you Mike. Great to be with you today.

**Bates:** What can you tell us about the Citizens Commission on Benghazi? What is it?

**Aronoff:** Accuracy In Media about a year ago decided that we were no longer going to just sit by while Congress held these series of hearings and the media was continuing to treat this as if it was a phony scandal. Just as the Obama Administration called it. So we decided to see if we could put together a group of former top military and intelligence officials to conduct our own investigation whether Congress continued or not. We were going to try to hold peoples' feet to the fire to push this thing. We reached out originally to a few people. Retired Admiral James Lyons, Retired General Tom McInerney, Retired General Paul Vallely and a number of other people joined us, including Former Representative Allen West and Pete Hoekstra, Former Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

**Bates:** We also have joining us on the telephone Larry Ward who is with Special Operations Speaks (SOS). Larry, welcome to Your Turn.



**Larry Ward:** Hi, thank you for having me.

**Bates:** What can you tell us about SOS?

**Ward:** Many of our SOS members are part of the Citizens' Commission on Benghazi and so we really appreciate everything that Roger and his group have done to put that together. SOS is an organization primarily of veterans that have served in the Special Operations. Whether it is Special Forces or Navy Seals or Commandos. They are high ranking officials who as veterans have a history of not only serving the country but being bonafide heroes. This group of veterans got together in mid 2012 after the Bin Laden raid; following the Obama Administration leak of secrets about Navy Seals and their role in that raid. SOS stood up and said enough is enough. This community is relatively quiet politically. It took a lot for them to come together. However, once they did they have become a force. The organization has lit the fire. Kept the fire roaring even after Obama won reelection. Every pundit, every reporter, every member on the Hill kept telling us Benghazi is dead. We said no, we are going to go and demand a special prosecutor or select committee. We kept pushing it until we made strong headway in April when the oversight hearings occurred. Then the funniest thing happened. Lois Lerner told on herself as we were getting close to Benghazi. That took Benghazi off the front pages for awhile. However, we fought and brought it back. We held a press conference on Capitol Hill and got a thousand Special Operations Veterans to sign a petition to demand a select committee. We unrolled a sixty foot by four foot scroll on the Capitol lawn, the longest petition ever delivered to the Congress with a thousand signatures with name and rank on it. We also delivered close to a million citizens' petitions to Members of Congress demanding a select committee. We didn't stop there. When the government closed down with the Sequester, they put barricades in front of the war memorials. We were the organization that held the Million Veteran March at the World War II Memorial and returned those barricades to the Presidential residence at the White House.



**Gordon:** Larry, the SOS was cited in Ken's' book *Dark Forces* as providing some valued assistance. I wonder if you could tell us about that.

**Ward:** It was Colonel Dick Brauer who is one of the founders of SOS and he was cited as was Captain Larry Bailey and Ken Benway.

**Gordon:** Roger, the Citizens' Commission put out an interim report in April, is that correct?

**Aronoff:** Yes, that's correct.

**Gordon:** What were the conclusions of the interim report?

**Aronoff:** Let me just mention that the three members of SOS that Larry just spoke of are all part of the Citizens Commission. Another person, Admiral Chuck Kubic, contacted us after we held our original conference last September and he came to us with the story on the Libyan civil war. When we held the April 22nd press conference he said that the whole war in Libya could have been averted. By way of background he was an Admiral during the Iraq and the Afghanistan wars and he stayed over in North Africa. He was working in Libya doing engineering projects. Qaddafi's government approached Kubic who then went over to AFRICOM just in the days when NATO was about to start its bombing campaign. The reports were that a humanitarian crisis was about to happen because Qaddafi was poised to invade Benghazi and Misrata. Kubic came to them and said Qaddafi was prepared under certain circumstances to abdicate under a white flag of truce. Kubic went to AFRICOM, and they went to Washington with this request; let's negotiate. Give peace a chance. The Nobel Peace Prize winning President said no and the bombing continued. Thousands of people died as a result what happened. Qaddafi knew that we knowingly facilitated the delivery of arms to Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda related groups in Libya and this became the title of our interim report: "How America switched sides on the war on terror." The arms went generally from East Europe into Qatar, financed by the UAE and shipped into Libya. This was at a time when NATO controlled the airspace, the ports and the entries into Libya. Chris Stevens, the Ambassador, was even there at the docks as these arms came in and the groups were not even attempting to hide it. They were under the black flags of Al Qaeda, Ansar al-Sharia and the weapons went to them. This led to the overthrow of Qaddafi and eventually the same people were involved in the attack on the Special Mission Compound in Benghazi.

**Bates:** You just said something which, if I understood you correctly, is shocking. Did you in fact say the United States has switched sides in the war on terror?

**Aronoff:** That' is what I said. One of the people in our commission is Clare Lopez of the Center for Security Policy. We have several retired CIA officers and she is one of them. Lopez is very knowledgeable on the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda and Hezbollah. With her assistance we have documented this. We have a confidential informant who came to us and provided much evidence that we have in emails and other records to show how these arms flowed and the exact route through Qatar back into Libya. It is equivalent to the situation we are faced with today in Iraq. Are we actually going to go in when we know the Quds Forces are already in Iraq trying to prop up the Maliki government and start bombing on their behalf when they are aligned with the Iranians? We saw this happening from the very beginning of the Administration when Obama went to Cairo, made his speech and invited the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood to come and attend there while not allowing Mubarak to come. I agree it is a shocking charge. However, we lay it out and defend it. I encourage people to go to [aim.org/benghazi](http://aim.org/benghazi) and you can see the entire report and the documentation. You can watch our conferences and see Clare Lopez, Admiral Lyons and Admiral Kubic tell their stories. All of this is there on the record and available on-line. Another one of our key findings that aroused these retired military people to get involved, that Ken Timmerman referred to in *Dark Forces*, was we did not use our military assets to attempt to rescue these people. As Admiral Lyons has pointed out we had a hundred thirty man Marine forces at Signorelli on Sicily an hour and a half to two hours away at the most. Obama claimed that we did everything we could to rescue those people, however his orders were either ignored or he never gave them.

**Bates:** I side with the, he never gave them part. I concur that the United States under Barack Obama has switched sides on the war of terror. I was just shocked to hear other people say it because most people won't. Larry Ward, I've got a question for you representing SOS. Barack Obama asked permission to go into Libya from the Arab League, the United Nations and NATO. He never asked Congress. Do you have a problem with that?

**Ward:** Well of course! There is something called the Constitution which the President believes is just an obstacle for him to either ignore or shred on a daily basis. Quite frankly his foreign policy has been haphazard at best.

**Bates:** Jerry, It is my understanding that MANPADS man portable air defense systems is what the acronym stands are basically shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles. My understanding is that a significant number of them went missing from Libya. What do we know about that?

**Gordon:** You heard Roger and Ken refer to Qatar. During the rebellion Qatar flew in a number of weapons of that type to locations outside of Libya, either Chad or in Niger and they were filtered into Libya. You also had MANPADS in Qadaffi's arsenal, a combination of Russian and

others. They were filtered out of Libya into Niger by the former head of the Libyan military command, Abdulhakim Belhadj who is basically Al Qaeda. In Niger they were fitted with CIA-improved battery packs and according to Ken's discussion these weapons traveled across the desert in something he called the "ant trade." Some of them were intercepted at the Egyptian border. However, a number of them also found their way into the Sinai where the Salafist and Al Qaeda affiliated terrorists are using them.

**Bates:** Is there any reason to believe that they are going to end up on U.S. soil?

**Gordon:** Not that we know of. According to Ken's account, some of the MANPADS found their way to the Taliban in Afghanistan courtesy of the Qataris in 2012 when a U.S. Army CH47 helicopter was apparently hit. They found forensic evidence that some of this material was related to the MANPADS with the CIA battery packs. Some former CIA officers who knew about this were alarmed. One of them that Ken cites in his book is John Maguire. He was former Deputy Chief of Station in Baghdad. He had been involved with monitoring Al Quds activities in Iraq, especially the deadly IED campaign. He went to then CIA Director, General Petraeus, and told him, there are MANPADS going into places we don't particularly like. Can I come and sit down with you and talk about this? Before Maguire could even do that John Brennan, who was White House counterterrorism czar called Petraeus and said you will not discuss this, period. The discussion between former CIA officer Maguire who discovered this MANPAD trade and Petraeus never occurred. The question arises what was going on inside the White House?

**Bates:** This is why it is so critical that the House of Representatives hold hearings which they are doing. Larry Ward of SOS where do you see these Congressional hearings going and do you really expect them to uncover the truth?

**Ward:** If you have seen the news recently they are not planning on convening the Benghazi Select Committee until the fall. When I last checked no definitive date has been fixed in October or November. Most likely it would occur after the mid-term elections. I do trust Rep. Trey Gowdy to prosecute very competently and successfully. However, Trey Gowdy will only be allowed to prosecute to the fullest extent any witness that John Boehner allows to testify.

**Bates:** Oh gee, that instills a lot of confidence in me that we are actually going to get to the truth.

**Ward:** I think we are going to get to the truth of things that don't circle back to John Boehner and/or Mike Rogers. That is my personal opinion. I think both of those Members of Congress are part of the Super 8, the folks in Congress that have the highest level of clearance and are briefed at the highest level in the House. They likely knew or at the least

had a heads up or maybe even gave the thumbs up to whatever covert Black Ops mission was going on in Libya. We suspect that they are going to do whatever they can to conceal that.

**Gordon:** Roger, doesn't this have a ring of familiarity with the secret war that the CIA, the Saudis and the Pakistani ISI were running during the 1980's in Afghanistan?

**Aronoff:** Yes, that's right. The situation we find ourselves in is there are strict laws against doing anything to arm any Al Qaeda groups and Ansar al-Sharia certainly was one. Yet it happened under a presidential directive signed back in March of 2011 just as we were about to go to war in Libya. Moreover, there was another finding signed in September 2013 by President Obama that allowed arms to be shipped to the so-called moderate rebels in Syria.

**Bates:** Robert Aronoff and Larry Ward thank you for giving us an insight into what the Citizens' Commission on Benghazi and Special Operations Speaks is doing to support the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

[Watch](#) the April 22, 2014 Accuracy in Media Citizens' Commission National Press Club Briefing on the Interim Report:

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