Image Frames, Cascading Activation, and Formation of Foreign Policy: A Case Study of the 2012 Benghazi Attacks

Michael Jablonski

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Image Frames, Cascading Activation, and Formation of Foreign Policy: A Case Study of the 2012 Benghazi Attacks

by

Michael Jablonski

Under the Direction of Carol Winkler, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2022
ABSTRACT

Images powerfully influence foreign policy. At one level, the existence of disturbing images directs attention to a problem that has not been on the agenda of political actors responsible for the formation of foreign policy in the United States. Bosnia, Darfur, and Abu Ghraib serve as examples of foreign policy issues in which images significantly affected the direction of policy. On another level, images function as a component of narrative establishing news frames about an issue. The diffusion and manipulation of images should be an integral part of discourse regarding foreign policy. Entman’s Cascading Activation Model (later revised as the Cascading Network Activation Model) describes a discursive process that provides insight into the construction of foreign policy. The model assumes that images and text inserted into the middle of the cascade by media establishes news frames. This project both tests whether the setting of news frames can be understood by analyzing images used in discourse surrounding a policy and whether non-media actors in the cascade have employed images. Images linked to articles on Benghazi published in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, LA Times, and USA Today during the year following the attack were analyzed for origin of the image, hierarchy in the cascade, and frame content. The results showed that images do not behave in the cascade in the same manner expected of textual frames. The attacks on American facilities in Benghazi on September 11-12, 2012 are placed in the context of Libya’s diplomatic history with the United States. The American presence (principally CIA) in Benghazi has never been explained. Using original materials from the Department of State and Congressional investigative
committees, the project concludes that it is highly probable the CIA established facilities using a State Department diplomatic mission to cover secret activities.

INDEX WORDS: News frames, Cascading Activation Models, Benghazi attacks, Images, Foreign policy
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May 2022
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Mary Grace Diehl. You are always intelligent, wise, dedicated, resourceful, insightful, and astute. But mostly you make me smile.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation exists because of many people.

My family distinguished themselves (as always) both by providing encouragement and substantively addressing issues raised by the dissertation. Elizabeth Newcamp, Rebecca Jablonski-Diehl, and Jeffrey Newcamp reviewed and critiqued early versions of the coding manual used in this project. Additionally, Lt.Col. Newcamp provided insight into weapons, aircraft, tactics, and command structure related to the project. Mary Grace Diehl, as ever, kept me on task.

Dr. Carol Winkler performed brilliantly as my dissertation director, but more so as a friend and confidant. Dr. Anthony Lemieux served on my committee and acted as an important informal advisor throughout my academic career. Dr. Toby Bolsen and Dr. Patrick Wade served selflessly on my committee. Dr. Amelia Arsenault and Dr. Shawn Powers provided valuable insight during early days of the project. Dr. Ben Miller smiled through many conversations about the dissertation, which may have been tortuous, all the while asking excellent questions. Dr. Houda Abadi assisted in harvesting photographs as the project started and in the process became a valued friend. Dr. Rasha Ramzy tirelessly (and cheerfully) assisted in identifying and recruiting potential coders.

I need to recognize Robert Diehl and Yennhi Luu for their dedication in completing the final coding. Ambassador Gordon Giffin and Maryscott Greenwood guided me through the bureaucracy at the State Department. Numerous people at the State Department and the U.S. House of Representatives deserve thanks but they asked not be named. You know who you are – thanks!
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADCIA</td>
<td>Acting Director of the CIA. Mike Morrell was the AD from the time of David Petraeus's resignation as Director (November 9, 2012) until the appointment of John Brennan on March 8, 2013'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press. The division that supplies photographs is known as AP Images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARB</td>
<td>A State Department investigative board appointed by the Secretary of State pursuant to 22 U.S.C. § 4831, et seq., to review incidents involving the security of U.S. diplomats. Secretary Clinton convened a board for the Benghazi attacks. The Benghazi ARB issued two reports on December 19, 2012 (one classified and the other unclassified).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM</td>
<td>Cascading Activation Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIF</td>
<td>Commander’s In-Extremis Force. Special Operations Force dedicated to counter-terrorism and hostage rescue attached to an area Combatant Commander. CENTCOM acted as the Combatant Command for Benghazi. Later called Crisis Response Force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.D.C.</td>
<td>United States District Court for the District of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNAM</td>
<td>Cascading Network Activation Model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/NCTC</td>
<td>Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. Matthew G. Olsen served as director at the time of the Benghazi attacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNI</td>
<td>Director of National Intelligence. The top intelligence official in the United States. James Clapper served as director at time of Benghazi attacks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOS</td>
<td>Department of State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>European Pressphoto Agency. A photo-exchange consortium comprised of European news organizations. At the time of the Benghazi attacks members came from France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Greece, and Hungary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAST</td>
<td>Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team, a specially-trained rapid-deployed Marine unit designed to quickly improve security at U.S. facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY</td>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNC</td>
<td>General National Congress. The Libyan legislative body established after the Civil War to replace the Transitional National Council. It ruled Libya from August 2012 to April 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRS</td>
<td>Global Response Staff. A division of the CIA Special Activities Division (since 2016 called the Special Activities Center) employing former special operations forces to provide security to CIA agents in the field. Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods worked for GRS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC</td>
<td>Intelligence Community. Established by President Reagan in 1981, the IC encompasses 17 agencies and departments that collect and analyze sensitive information. It is supervised by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANPADS</td>
<td>Man-Portable Air Defense System, a shoulder-fired surface-to-air anti-aircraft missile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>Mobile Security Deployments. State Department tactical units. There are 9 teams of 6 person special agents deployed to defend diplomatic facilities in crisis situations and to train deployed security officers. Three security teams pulled out of Libya in August 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTC</td>
<td>National Counterterrorism Center. A unit of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, it monitors communication and provides threat assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEA</td>
<td>Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. US Department of State agency charged with overseeing diplomatic policy in the Near East. Its Office of Maghreb Affairs (NEA/MAG) was responsible for Libya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEA/MAG</td>
<td>The Maghreb Affairs Office within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSA National Security Agency. US intelligence agency monitoring global telecommunications

NSC National Security Council. Part of the Executive Office of the President, it is the principal advisor to the President on foreign policy. The National Security Advisor chairs its meetings. At the time of the Benghazi attacks the National Security Advisor was Thomas Donilon.

NTC National Transition Council. An alternate name for the TNC.

ODNI Office of the Director of National Intelligence. ODNI directs all intelligence agencies in the United States. Since 2005 ODNI produced the President’s Daily Brief.

PACER Public Access to Court Electronic Records. An online service affording access to federal court records.

PO Principal Officer. Usually the highest ranking officer in a consular mission

QRF Quick Reaction Force, military unit capable of rapid response. TMF Benghazi hired native Libyans to live in the compound as a reaction force.

RPG Rocket Propelled Grenade.

RSM Resolute Support Media. A NATO non-combatant unit that acted as a press office for the multinational force in Afghanistan.

TNC Transitional National Conference, sometimes known as National Transitional Council (NTC). The government set up by rebels during and after the Civil War. Chris Stevens served as the U.S. Representative to the TNC before becoming ambassador to Libya on June 7, 2012.

TMF Temporary Mission Facility. A State Department outpost that does not provide consular services.

TOC Tactical Operations Center, a secured communications facility within a diplomatic compound capable of monitoring cameras and directing response operations

UAV Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, a drone. Two unarmed Predator drone monitored the Benghazi attacks.
WIRe

Worldwide Intelligence Review, an online secure data-sharing platform operated by the CIA Directorate of Analysis that distributes highest level intelligence analysis to senior government officials and the military
1 INTRODUCTION

Images energize the formation of foreign policy. In extreme cases, such as the horror of Abu Ghraib, reaction to pictures ignited protests that brought the issue of mistreatment of prisoners by a small group of U.S. soldiers to the public’s attention. The public experienced dissonance between what they believed to be American values and the actions of some of its representatives overseas. The emerging discontent forced official Washington to construct new policy.

The salience of images as a persuasion device exceeds the ability of textual argument to motivate action. As will be seen, when confronted with opposing views presented textually and visually a significant percentage of viewers adopt the narrative supported by images. Even when viewers receive information that pictures presented to them have been altered, the visual argument tends to succeed.

The evident power of pictures led some scholars to speculate that images can function to establish frames. An argument embedded in a communication succeeds when the issue features carefully selecting images that culturally resonate with viewers that are repeatedly presented to the public. Images generally accompany textual material such that discussion about pictures often devolves into exploration of text. The project presented here begins to explore the framing power of pictures in the context of foreign policy.

The Cascading Activation Model represents an attempt to explain policy formation after the Cold War. Previously, media and the governing class supported each other as officials regularly supplied stories to reporters. As a result, newspapers demonstrably supported extant policies. Robert Entman recognized that the evolving relationship between media and elected officials created an element of contestation
among elites. The new political landscape required new tools to evaluate the production of policy. Images in the new landscape, their function, and their use in frame manipulation pervades this project.

The attacks on American facilities in Benghazi provides the case study for the project. Benghazi and its aftermath changed American politics and political communication. Much remains unknown about the American presence in the city. The large CIA presence there has never been explained. The secret remains today.

Seven chapters follow this introduction, which serves as Chapter One. Chapter Two discusses roles played by various actors in formulating foreign policy. An explanation of the evolution of Cascading Activation Models precedes a discussion of case studies employing it. The chapter ends with an exposition of social, military, diplomatic, and communication changes in response to the attacks.

Chapters Three and Four should be read together. Chapter three is a brief history of the area of Libya now dominated by Benghazi. The tumult and changing political alliances evident during the Libyan Civil War in 2011 have deep antecedents in Libyan culture. The chapter focuses on the pandemonium that characterized U.S.-Libyan relations. Chapter four narrows the focus to two compounds established under diplomatic cover by the CIA in Benghazi. Although the CIA never disclosed its purpose in Benghazi, it built an exceedingly large walled compound protected by former special operations warfare officers contracted to the agency. The chapter describes the three attacks on Americans. Ambassador Stevens and a State Department official died during the initial attack on September 11, 2012. Two separate attacks on the CIA facility resulted in the deaths of two more Americans. The chapter ends by discussing the Congressional hearings and media coverage.
Chapter Five describes the procedure for collecting photographs and the creation of the database. Various methods for assessing the possession of images by government agencies used in the study are explained. A description of the coding process closes the chapter.

The analysis of the image database forms the core of Chapter Six. The use of pictures by each level of the cascade is explained. The analysis thoroughly explores the question of hierarchy within the cascade as it applies to the flow of images.

Chapter Seven examines the frames which appear in the visual record. The analysis applies Entman’s four categories that define the purpose of frames. The approach is unique because it is organized around the categories rather than starting with the frames themselves.

Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation with a compilation of thoughts derived from the analysis of images. The limitations of the study are discussed, as well as opportunities for further research.

2 ACTORS IN FOREIGN POLICY FORMATION

The formation of foreign policy in the United States involves multiple actors with different interests wielding varying power. Policy evolves as the result of interaction between the actors. The structure of the interaction, especially the role of media in facilitating and contributing to the discussion, forms the object of study of this dissertation.

Several models attempt to describe the decision-making process. The Rational Actor Model, for example, applies rational choice theory to depict the formation of foreign policy as a practice involving the establishment of goals, examination of options
and their consequences, and optimization of beneficial results.¹ The Bureaucratic Politics Model understands policy to result from competition among entrenched bureaucracies that derive power by employing resources they represent.² The Organizational Process Model analyzes policy formation regarding competing standard operating procedures employed by factions within the government.³ There are others. All the foreign policy analysis models assume the existence of communicative interaction between the actors.

Multiple actors participate in forming policy. Policy develops in a complex environment. Policymakers within the government respond to internal and external factors that constrain the adoption of available options.⁴ A combination of factors establishes an operational environment or setting within which policy discourse takes place. In the United States, the President, including institutions within the Executive Branch, generally institute foreign policy initiatives that evolve due to interaction with Congress. Non-governmental interest groups join the debate. Media reporting facilitates the discourse by providing a channel for information transfers and active promotion of policies, eventually allowing the public to participate in the process.⁵

Scholars generally acknowledge the influence of media in foreign policy formation, although with an incomplete understanding of processes effecting media influence. Michael Brecher recognized that media performed an integral function in forming foreign policy as "the communication network within the political system."⁶ In Brecher's view, mediated information allows incumbent elites to gauge popular opinion.

¹ Nau, Perspectives on International Relations.
² Jackson and Sørensen, Introduction to International Relations.
³ Allison and Zelikow, Essence of Decision.
⁴ Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "The Decision-Making Approach to the Study of International Relations."
⁵ Entman, "Cascading Activation"; Entman, "Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy."
limiting policy choices, thereby circumscribing the environment in which perceived real actors can operate. Media will only exert influence, in this view, after the delivery and utilization of information.

The salience of any interaction between media and policymakers driving press management strategies remains uncertain. Scholarship ranges from beliefs that the press wields extensive power over foreign policy, to beliefs that press power excels when establishing foreign policy in aid of humanitarian disasters, to arguments that media does little more than mobilize consent for policies established by elites, to assertions that media reflects beliefs of elites but does not engage with them. While few question that media plays a role in policy formation, no consensus exists on the extent of that influence.

The role of the public in the formation of foreign policy relates to the function of media. The media's multivariate roles in foreign policy allow it to influence foreign policy not just by framing the debate but by operating on politicians concerned about their public perceptions. To the extent that policy elites pay attention to public opinion, the agenda-setting function allows the media to make issues salient and guide public interpretation of issues. The focus of public attention as reflected in the media can guide the behavior of politicians. "The President cares about public perceptions. The President has always depended on public approval as a source of legitimacy and strength in dealing with other actors, both foreign and domestic." The need for

---

7 Cohen, “The View from the Academy’.”
8 Holbrooke, “No Media - No War.”
9 Herman and Chomsky, Manufacturing Consent: A Political Economy of Mass Media; Herman, “The Media’s Role in US Foreign Policy.”
11 Iyengar and Kinder, News That Matters.
political capital motivates political actors to develop comprehensive strategies to manage the press.\textsuperscript{13}

Press management to influence public perceptions results from the interaction of various actors. The structure of the interplay requires further analysis. The Cascading Activation Model (CAM) developed as a robust explanation of such communicative processes.

2.1 The Cascading Activation Models

CAM and a later refinement, Cascading Network Activation Model (CNAM), represent "a coherent concept of framing within a new model of the relationship between government and media in U.S. foreign policymaking."\textsuperscript{14} CAM developed into a leading model for analysis of contributions made by foreign policy actors in the development of policy. This dissertation contributes to understanding the functioning of images within the CAM and CNAM frameworks to develop foreign policy in the information age. It challenges the underlying assumption of cascade models that the process follows a rigid hierarchical structure when setting frames.

CAM extended earlier work portraying the relationship between media and government by challenging the assumption that media did not have a role in forming policy. Assumptions about the interaction between media and government characterize "the news media as being influenced by, and not influencing, government policy."\textsuperscript{15} Herman and Chomsky believe that the press served to do little more than to manufacture consent for policies developed by elites.\textsuperscript{16} Bennett shows that press reliance

\textsuperscript{13} Cohen, “Presidential Rhetoric and the Public Agenda.”
\textsuperscript{14} Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 415.
\textsuperscript{15} Robinson, “Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy,” 525.
\textsuperscript{16} Herman and Chomsky, \textit{Manufacturing Consent: A Political Economy of Mass Media}. 
on elite sources biased coverage favorably towards those in power.\textsuperscript{17} Even where media intends to cover a foreign issue impartially, structural processes based on the need for reporters to nurture sources invite bias. Whether intentional or not, media often favors incumbent positions. Entman, for example, describes a media tendency to reflect policy positions of the Administration rather than a contrary critical interpretation in his comparison of news coverage of airliners shot down by Russian and by American military.\textsuperscript{18}

Early media-government interaction models tend to be absolutist about the press in the face of examples demonstrating media contestation of incumbent policy. The media at times supports policy elites but at other times challenges them. Media coverage during the Vietnam War, for example, slowly evolved to challenge U.S. policy.\textsuperscript{19} The 1968 television special about the Tet offensive in which Walter Cronkite concluded that the U.S. could neither win nor lose the war, but that country was "mired in a stalemate" emerged as a significant event undermining the Johnson administration's policy.\textsuperscript{20} ("If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost Middle America.")\textsuperscript{21} Media challenges of Israeli policy on the Intifada\textsuperscript{22} and American policy towards Somalia prompted policy modifications.\textsuperscript{23} The rise of ideological media, such as Fox News, increases the prevalence of challenges to the incumbent policy when Democrats hold the White House. Fox News exhibits a preference to quote Republicans over Democrats, generally challenging Administration policies,\textsuperscript{24} while sporadically presenting liberal guests without giving equal air time to

\textsuperscript{17} Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, “None Dare Call It Torture.”
\textsuperscript{18} Entman, “Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents.”
\textsuperscript{19} Hallin, \textit{The Uncensored War}.
\textsuperscript{20} Culbert, “Television’s Visual Impact on Decision-Making in the USA, 1968.”
\textsuperscript{21} Cronkite, \textit{A Reporter’s Life}, 258.
\textsuperscript{22} Wolfsfeld, \textit{Media and Political Conflict}.
\textsuperscript{23} Hines, “Pity, Not US Security, Motivated Use of GIs in Somalia, Bush Says.”
\textsuperscript{24} Aday, “Chasing the Bad News.”
develop their arguments. Fox News analysis of Administration policy positions often devolves into "mock and ridicule" personal attacks. MSNBC undertakes a similar role as it favors Democrats. Media at times may mirror governing elites in the formation of foreign policy, but it often participates in the process.

It would be a mistake to model the impact of media on foreign policy by concentrating on the media alone without considering the context of other political actors formulating policy. As Timothy Cook argues, “Journalists should not be considered the passive recipients of official information but as active participants functioning as a political institution in their own right.” Entman's Cascade Activation Models treat the media as an active participant in policy formation. The media at times mirrors official positions or marshaled support for a policy, but it also sometimes acts as a gateway for issues, sometimes challenging official positions, at times giving voice to contrarian arguments, and at other times providing context. Cascade Activation Models account for variable media roles by treating the media as a political institution important to the discourse that formulates policy. The recognition of media as a political institution endows Cascade Activation with remarkable vitality.

Two hundred sixty-two scholarly works have referenced CAM since its introduction in 2003. Sixty-one additional articles and books have discussed its network variant. Although Cascade Activation developed as a tool to analyze foreign policy issues, researchers apply it to problems as varied as drone policy, a California ballot

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27 Robinson, “Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy,” 528; Cook, *Governing with the News*.
28 Entman, “Cascading Activation.”
29 Rowling, Sheets, and Jones, “Frame Contestation in the News.”
measure on tribal casinos, Al-Jazeera’s coverage of headscarf wearers in France, the financial crisis, the construction of a highway in Costa Rica, regulation of stem cell research policy, political responses to terrorism, and tax cuts instituted during the Bush administration.

### 2.1.1 Cascading Activation as Frame Development Sequences

The Cascade Activation Models describe the formation of foreign policy as a recursive process in which elites propose frames, contested at first by opposing elites but later by others who modify and communicate alternatives. Entman explains the process as "interpretive frames activate and spread from the top level of a stratified system (the White House) to the network of non-administration elites, and on to news organizations, their texts, and the public—and how interpretations respond to feedback from lower to higher levels."  

Four characteristics typify the Cascade Activation Models. First, Cascade Activation recognizes that "the ability to promote the spread of frames is stratified" among political actors in a hierarchy starting with the White House and agencies controlled by it, to Congress, former officials and others treated as experts by the media, then to media, and on to the public. The model describes policy formation in terms of non-formal interaction involving a multitude of players.

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30 Van Leuven, “Cascades of News Framing: Wrangling Rhetoric in Schwarzenegger’s ‘the Indians Are Ripping Us Off!’”
31 Cherribi, “From Baghdad to Paris.”
32 Smith, Boje, and Melendrez, “The Financial Crisis and Mark-to-Market Accounting.”
33 Ortiz, “Up the Cascade.”
34 Fahmy, Relly, and Wanta, “President’s Power to Frame Stem Cell Views Limited.”
35 Canel, “Communicating Strategically in the Face of Terrorism.”
36 Bell and Entman, “The Media’s Role in America’s Exceptional Politics of Inequality Framing the Bush Tax Cuts of 2001 and 2003.”
38 Entman, 420.
Second, the model asserts that elites at the top of the cascade possess considerable strength to promote frames and counterframes. The White House, and agencies attached to it, inhabits the loftiest position in the cascade. Congress, its staff, and high-level policy experts not connected to the Administration occupy the position immediately lower on the stratigraphic column. Assigning the White House to the position of most significant power reflects beliefs about relative power assigned constitutional actors. The constitutional framework divides responsibility for foreign policy forces confrontation between Congress and the President. The Cascading Activation Models reflect the contestation process in which policy is proposed, confronted, and modified.

Third, the models operate in a broad context that describe the effectiveness of frames as cultural resonance. "Those frames that employ more culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential for influence."39 Grounding frame activation in cultural resonance means that policy evolution does not occur in isolation but incorporates a broader debate. In short, policy matures in public.

Fourth, the models assert that both words and images contributed to media frames. Although most studies employing the model concentrate on text, the Cascading Activation Models recognize the potential for injection of images can into the discourse. Entman's cascade suggests that the media's formation of news frames engages with the Administration and other elites.40 "Ideological media, emboldened by close relationships with elites, can trigger and amplify leaders' initiatives."41

39 Entman, 417.
40 Entman, "Cascading Activation."
41 Entman and Usher, "Framing in a Fractured Democracy," 305.
Cascading Activation endures as a process model that facilitates analysis of mechanisms employed by the U.S. executive to promulgate a frame for a particular issue. Cascading Activation Models interrogate power relationships among the media and political elites. In part, the model’s strength develops by transcending interactions between political actors and mass media when it takes into account interrelationships among political actors, mass media, and audiences. Entman’s recursive cascades allow the theory to explain the development of counterframes and the creation of frames anywhere on the cascade, such as frames that media or audiences interjects into the policy discussion.\textsuperscript{42}

### 2.1.2 Origination, Hierarchy, and Frame Content

Three concepts integral to CAM/CNAM form the basis for analyzing the cascade: origination of texts and images establishing frames, the hierarchical status of the originator, and the content of the frames. Origination refers to the entity responsible for injecting a concept into a foreign policy debate. Most often, but not always, foreign policy discussion originates with the Executive branch. Hierarchical status refers to a position in the metaphorical cascade occupied by the actor. The position reflects power, with the President at the top of the cascade exercising the most power and the citizenry at the bottom the least. Content of frames, especially when changed over time due to contestation, demonstrates elements of policy discussion that compete for frame setting and activation.

Entman’s Cascading Network Activation Model attempts to provide a framework to explain the creation and evolution of frames in foreign policy discourse.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{42} Entman, \textit{Projections of Power}.  
\textsuperscript{43} Entman, “Cascading Activation.”
Cascading Activation Models propose that an initiative originating with the Executive branch advances discursive frames that elites not in the Administration (such as oppositional members of Congress or policy think tanks) countered in American foreign policy. The discourse may follow two paths. The discourse may follow a recursive process in which Administration and non-Administration elites engaged in a framing battle. The framing battle attracts media attention. The issue cascades down to the media that participates in the process both by reporting the substance of the struggle between Administration and non-Administration elites and joining the discourse through editorial slant and analysis. Both Administration and non-Administration elites recursively engage the media. The issue next tumbles down to the general population, which can engage in its own debate that may influence discourse in upper levels of the cascade.

Actors populate each cascade level with actors who may originate text and images that inform the discourse. Tracking the origination of text and images identifies both actors participating in the discourse and each actor's contribution. The analysis aids in understanding which actors originated framing elements.

Hierarchical relationships in the cascade constitute the second type of analysis that interrogates power exercised by each actor. (See Figure 2.1) Cascading Activation asserts that political actors at higher cascade levels wield more influence in establishing frames than actors occupying a lower position. The models assume that the exercise of Presidential power, for example, establishes robust frames with greater vitality than actions by non-Administration elites, which possess more power than the media or ordinary citizens. Disproportional power distribution throughout the cascade cannot guarantee success for political actors high in the cascade; it just means that those actors
promote their frames with less effort. Fahmy, for example, reports that in the case of stem cell legislation, the President failed in setting news frames frame favorable to his preferred position.\textsuperscript{44} The distribution of power in the case of foreign policy formation results in a fuller understanding of factors critical to policy determination.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.png}
\caption{Information Cascades in Foreign Policy Debates}
\end{figure}

The third type of analysis looks at frame content in the context of the cascade. Cascading Activation models relationships between media and government and, to a lesser extent, the public. Framing broadly refers to the relationship between the manipulation of information presentation and subsequent attitudinal or behavioral changes resulting from exposure to framed information. Framing constitutes the practice of "presenting individuals with logically equivalent options in semantically different ways."\textsuperscript{45} The presentation of information in novel or alternative forms that alter meanings and references constructed by the reader or viewer characterizes framing. It refers "to the various ways decision situations are presented that lead

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{44} Fahmy, Relly, and Wanta, "President’s Power to Frame Stem Cell Views Limited."
\textsuperscript{45} Krishnamurthy, Carter, and Blair, "Attribute Framing and Goal Framing Effects in Health Decisions," 95.
\end{footnotesize}
decision makers to construct markedly different representations of such situations."  

Gamson describes framing "as a discursive process of strategic actors utilizing symbolic resources to participate in collective sense-making about public policy issues."  

Frames facilitate assimilation of large quantities of information available to individuals from multiple sources by providing an organizational structure that resonates with existing schema and cultural beliefs. The difficulty of assimilating vast quantities of information with pre-existing perceptions of reality causes a person to rely on external organizational principles. Frames function as mechanisms with inextricable links to culture that assist in the interpretation of reality. They do this by "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution." The frame, once set, acquires power from its resonance with beliefs held by members of the audience. Frames constitute the message that engenders an opinion in the reader, either favorable or unfavorable to the issue under discussion. The characteristics of a frame form an essential element in the construction of knowledge because frames associate presented material with pre-existing beliefs. Resonance between incumbent knowledge and new material favors a particular perception or belief. Frames create a favored conviction by manipulating "key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative." Choices made by journalists presenting a
story influence knowledge formation in ways that inculcate a particular belief. The decision to frame a story in a particular manner biases audience interpretation of the story.\textsuperscript{52} The creation of supportive ideas embodies a policy debate. Content analysis of Cascading Activation frames reveals the various actors' success in the process.

\textbf{2.1.3 Cascade Models Embrace Networks}

Extended in 2008, the Cascading Network Activation Model diverges from the original cascade formulation by recognizing that elites from the President's party not only can be oppositional to other elites but also oppositional to salient networks of political actors. (See Figure 2.2) "The Cascading Network Activation model traces the diffusion of frames from the President and administration through the networks of elites outside the administration who also serve as media sources; to the networks of news organizations and within and across them; to the networks of journalists; on to the textual networks of connected and repeated keywords, themes, and visual images and symbols published in media texts; and finally to the networks of associations activated in citizens' minds."\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Price, Tewksbury, and Powers, "Switching Trains of Thought."
\textsuperscript{53} Entman, "Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy."
Modifying CAM to include networks allows Entman to apply the analytical framework to international communications, thereby providing a theoretical structure for public diplomacy. Entman expands Cascading Activation to consider the roles of media, elites, and governments operating in a foreign country. The inclusion of networks in the model expands the population of potential actors with roles in policy formation.

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54 Entman.
The Entman and Usher revision of Cascade Activation Models in 2018 adds five "pump-valves" (platforms, analytics, algorithms, ideological media, and rogue actors) believed to possess abilities to boost and restrict communication flows to capture "whether, how, and under what circumstances digitalized communication of frames actually redistributes power and enhances democracy." The new model abandoned the hierarchical arrangement of earlier model iterations that place the presidency at the apex of the cascade and the citizenry at the bottom. (See Figure 2.3)

![Figure 2.3 Entman's 2018 Revised Cascade](image)

The new arrangement places mainstream media in the center of a complex flow map hemmed in by Democratic elites, liberal media, and left-leaning publics on one side and Republican elites, conservative media, and right-leaning publics on the other. The model suggests that each group not only feed mainstream media but directly communicate with ideological media and with publics in ways not dependent on mainstream media.

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55 Entman and Usher, “Framing in a Fractured Democracy,” 299.
The revised model presents a modified theoretical construct that research does not yet support. Entman and Usher acknowledge, "Only research can establish the actual networked communication pathways and impacts on power hierarchies." The updated model, Entman and Usher explained, serves as a guide for future research. "Despite scholarly fears of appearing biased, the asymmetrically disintegrating public sphere hypothesized and modeled here demands genuinely empirical research, not false equivalencies." No published research to date employs the revised model.

2.1.4 Application of Cascade Models

Text-only Studies. Scholars employ CAM extensively to analyze issues on a textual level. It facilitates the interrogation of frames, ranging from Entman's work on Abu Ghraib, to Azpiroz on public and media diplomacy of the war on terror, Canel on the Spanish government response to the 2004 Madrid bombings, Hayes and Guardino on media use of foreign criticism of the Iraq war in the absence of significant elite domestic conflict, and Valenzano on Canadian messaging regarding the war on terror.

Studies employing CAM/CNAM do not critically challenge the structure of Entman's models except when changes are necessary to adapt to issues other than...

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56 Entman and Usher, 303.
57 Entman and Usher, 307.
59 Entman, "Punctuating the Homogeneity of Institutionalized News."
60 Azpiroz, "Framing as a Tool for Mediatic Diplomacy Analysis."
61 Canel, "Communicating Strategically in the Face of Terrorism."
62 Hayes and Guardino, "Whose Views Made the News?"
63 Valenzano, "Framing the War on Terror in Canadian Newspapers."
American foreign policy. In these adaptive cases, the basic structure remains intact. Cherribi, for example, adapted CNAM to the exigencies of studying Islamic cultural traditions by positioning the emir of Qatar at the top of the cascade, a variety of elites (Arab League, Arab leaders, Islamic institutions, and Western leaders such as the White House and U.S. officials) just below, media (including a religious leader, Al Qaradawi, who frequently appears on Al-Jazeera), news frames, and then the pan-Arab and Muslim public. Similarly, but less able to transform the message frame, Van Leuven replaces the President at the top of the cascade with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and Congress with the California legislature, in a study analyzing arguments over casino gambling. The general direction of studies adapting Cascading Activation to non-foreign policy issues proceeded by creating a corpus of articles on a pre-defined subject for textual analysis.

Even when analyzing televised stories - a very visual medium - textual analysis predominates over visuals. Bell & Entman, for example, examine coverage of Bush tax cuts on NBC, CBS, and ABC by textual analysis of 187 transcripts without any reference to accompanying visual material broadcast by the networks.

Of the three essential components of analysis in Cascading Activation (origination, hierarchy, content), all the studies performing a text-only analysis of frames focused on content as the primary analysis element to the virtual exclusion of origination and hierarchy. Only Hayes and Guardino, as well as Fleischer and

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64 Cherribi, “From Baghdad to Paris,” 134.
65 Van Leuven, “Cascades of News Framing: Wrangling Rhetoric in Schwarzenegger’s ‘the Indians Are Ripping Us Off!'”
66 Bell and Entman, “The Media’s Role in America’s Exceptional Politics of Inequality Framing the Bush Tax Cuts of 2001 and 2003.”
67 Hayes and Guardino, “Whose Views Made the News?”
Canel,69 purport to analyze frame origination. These three papers represent the entire scholarly effort to identify originators of frames. None of them analyze origination other than to identify content by assigning labels employing generic origination language. For example, Canel identifies frames as "government and Opposition frames,"70 among other frames, but does not delve deeper into the origin puzzle. Category labels aided in identifying frames but did not interrogate the underlying significance of which actors put the frame in play.

Labels facilitate understanding of superficial hierarchical relationships because identification allows frames to be placed in the appropriate level of the cascade, with the President at the top and citizens at the bottom. None of the textual studies use the resulting hierarchy to analyze power relationships. Entman proposes, and studies using the model assume, that the President at the top wields the most power with salience degrading at each cascade descent. Fahmy's analysis of the discourse surrounding the framing of issues about stem cell research in the George W. Bush administration remains the only example of a textual study examining power.71 Her paper concludes that the President wielded insufficient power to control issue frames based on analyzing the tone and direction of news stories. The analysis does not distinguish between power to establish frames and power to influence policy. It reaffirms the usefulness of Cascading Activation as an analytical tool by demonstrating that although elites and the media never adopted the President's frame, it wielded sufficient power to prevent veto overrides of both the 2005 and 2007 versions of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act.

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69 Canel, “Communicating Strategically in the Face of Terrorism.”
70 Canel, 217.
71 Fahmy, Relly, and Wanta, “President’s Power to Frame Stem Cell Views Limited.”
Text and Image Studies. Cascading Activation Models assert that both text and images activate frames. CAM/CNAM users uncritically accept the implication that images function like text in setting frames. Only one study explicitly examines the interaction of text and images. Entman examines images published by CBS and Time Magazine in a comparison study of framing following the destruction of a Korean Air Lines plane by Russian fighters in 1983 and of an Iranian Air aircraft by U.S. forces five years later. Although the article extensively discusses graphics used by the two media actors, an analysis of textual material grounds the image analysis. For example, Entman explicitly states that the text established frames ("we can distinguish four separate (though related), salient aspects of the text that helped create the moral or technical frame"). Images played a secondary role reinforcing the textual frames ("The magazines' cover art and the graphics inside also confirmed the agency depictions for each event"). The essay did not attempt to perform an analysis of the effect of images on frames.

The CNA analysis by Entman compares media descriptions of two similar foreign policy events. The study discusses the origin of frames in general terms showing that media had uncritically adopted an Administration view that an American Navy ship shot down an Iranian airliner due to equipment failures. In contrast, moral outrage had characterized the response to the Russian downing of an American passenger plane. The study identifies media outlets participating in the discourse when comparing the coverage of the two events but did not attempt to determine frame origin. Similarly, the

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72 Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents."
73 Entman, 11.
74 Entman, 13.
study never considers hierarchical power, apparently assuming that Presidential power prevailed. The article constitutes a comprehensive discussion of frame content but neglects origin or hierarchy.

*Image-only Studies.* The complexity involved in visual frame analysis results in the frequency of textual studies exceeding the number of image studies. "Research on framing and the news of foreign policy has paid scant attention to the visual dimension of media coverage, even though many scholars suspect it has substantial influence. The major reason for the dearth of attention is presumably the difficulty of developing a coding scheme that measures the images' cognitive and affective content, a difficulty compounded by the absence of any well-developed models of how visual images affect political thinking and feeling."  

Studies identifying image frames consider image origin only by identifying the media publishing the imagery, not where the media obtained the image. Fahmy, for example, performs a comparative analysis of 9/11 and Afghan war images published by English- and Arabic-language media that discloses differential emphasis on war and victim frames in an English-language newspaper, *International Herald Tribune*, contrasted with frames in the Arabic-language *Al-Hayat*. Along with Daekyung Kim, she later analyzes the content of Iraq war images used by the *New York Times* and *The Guardian*. Similarly, scholars employ Cascade Activation Models to examine pictures published after a mass shooting at Virginia Tech; A.P. photographs depicting Afghan

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75 Entman, *Projections of Power*, 56.
76 Fahmy, “Framing Visual News: The 9/11 Attacks & the War in Afghanistan in English & Arabic Newspapers.”
77 Fahmy and Kim, “Picturing the Iraq War.”
78 Fahmy and Roedl, “Lessons from Virginia Tech.”
women;\textsuperscript{79} the 2008 Olympic torch relay;\textsuperscript{80} international coverage of the destruction of Saddam Hussein's statue;\textsuperscript{81} and graphic images in Al-Jazeera.\textsuperscript{82} These comparative studies identify frames without interrogating the relationship between the images and policy formation.

The few authors exploring image-set frames independent of text do not employ Cascading Network Activation as an analytical framework. Griffin and Lee create genre classifications for over 1,000 Gulf War images published in three news magazines but do not examine visual frames.\textsuperscript{83} Zeng and Akinro,\textsuperscript{84} Arpan et al.,\textsuperscript{85} Gibson and Zillman,\textsuperscript{86} Iyer, et al.,\textsuperscript{87} and Pfau, et al.,\textsuperscript{88} perform content analyses of images but not in the context of a cascade. Fahmy discusses frames in several content analyses that do not relate frames to relevant policy discussions, nor does she employ a Cascade Network Activation model.\textsuperscript{89} Treating images as an appurtenance to text rather than a discrete component in narrative limits prior research on visual frames.

Image studies also tend to ignore hierarchical relationships explicit in the Cascading Activation Models. Fahmy, for example, examines visual frames using Cascading Activation in a comparative analysis of international and national media visually reporting the toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue in Firdos Square, Baghdad.

\textsuperscript{79} Fahmy, “Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During the Taliban Regime and After the Fall of the Taliban Regime.”
\textsuperscript{80} Huang and Fahmy, “Picturing a Journey of Protest or a Journey of Harmony?”
\textsuperscript{81} Fahmy, “They Took It Down.”
\textsuperscript{82} Johnson and Fahmy, “When Blood Becomes Cheaper Than a Bottle of Water.”
\textsuperscript{83} Griffin, “Picturing America’s War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq.”
\textsuperscript{84} Zeng and Akinro, “Picturing the Jos Crisis Online in Three Leading Newspapers in Nigeria.”
\textsuperscript{85} Arpan et al., “News Coverage of Social Protests and the Effects of Photographs and Prior Attitudes.”
\textsuperscript{86} Gibson and Zillman, “Reading Between the Photographs: The Influence of Incidental Pictorial Information on Issue Perception.”
\textsuperscript{87} Iyer et al., “Understanding the Power of the Picture.”
\textsuperscript{88} Pfau et al., “The Effects of Print News Photographs of the Casualties of War”; Pfau et al., “The Influence of Television News Depictions of the Images of War on Viewers.”
\textsuperscript{89} Fahmy and Kim, “Picturing the Iraq War”; Fahmy, “Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During the Taliban Regime and After the Fall of the Taliban Regime.”
on April 9, 2003. Although the analysis discusses activation cascades at length, it does not use the model to discuss foreign policy formation at any cascade level other than in the media. Interaction of actors at various levels of discourse resulting in the evolution of frames and counterframes in foreign policy forms the essence of the Cascading Activation Models. No study considers policy formation using purely image analysis to explore the interactions of actors.

The Cascading Activation Model assumes that media introduces image frames at lower levels of the cascade, thereby elevating the importance of analyzing images functioning in a cascade given the significance of the visual narrative. However, opportunities exist for upper levels to influence the construction of frames. The Cascade Activation Models place the Administration at a preferred position in foreign policy debates because it initiates policy proposals, limiting other groups to reactive roles. Whether the Administration occupied a similar role in terms of visual frames remains unknown.

2.1.5 Critique of Cascading Activation Models

Cascading Activation Models fail to explain the role of images in a policy debate. Cascading Activation assumes that either text or images establish frames. Images in a cascade may not behave in the same manner as a text. For example, it asserts that the President exercises a large amount of power in establishing frames at the top of the cascade. The model, however, relegates the origination of images to the media, not the President or any other level. The question of whether visual argument occurs at other levels of the cascade remains open to investigation. Nothing prevents the President or

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90 Fahmy, “‘They Took It Down.’”
other elites from participating in foreign policy discourse using visual materials to set frames. The media's potential to dominate visual debate means that images operate differently than text in the cascade. A hypothetical Cascade Activation Model focused on images, for example, may better explain the diffusion of image frames by eversion of CAM/CNAM, with media occupying the top of the cascade.

Images in a cascade do not behave in the same manner as a text. The model assigns the origination of images to media, implying that media exercises greater power in the visual sphere than the President or Congress and their associated elites even though both inhabit higher cascade levels. An unanswered question is whether visual argument occurs at other levels of the cascade. Nothing prevents the President or other elites from participating in foreign policy discourse at a visual level.

Interrogating the role of images, this study contributes to the literature on cascade theory in three ways. First, it considers how images function in the cascade by establishing the origination of images that appear in the cascade. The study explores whether media dominate the visual debate and the extent to which other actors participate. Second, the study examines the hierarchical relationship of actors participating in a visual debate on foreign policy. Establishing a hierarchy helps determine the relative power of actors in this domain. Third, the study establishes the content of the visual frames in a foreign policy issue using the Cascading Activation framework.
2.2 Imagery in the Formation of Foreign Policy

2.2.1 The Role of Visuals in Establishing Foreign Policy

Retrospective analyses of foreign policy discourse acknowledge visuality as a factor in foreign policy formation. Analysis by foreign policy scholars tends to categorize images as constituting a factor forcing policymakers to concentrate on specific issues. Examples of foreign policy issues in which visuality forms a part of the policymaking process include Bosnia, Darfur, My Lai, and Abu Ghraib. Visuality constitutes an element in the construction of identity motivating international relations. International Relations approaches that incorporate visuality do not analyze the importance of visual frames to discourse, but they acknowledge that images form an essential subject of discourse analysis. International Relations studies constitute a macro approach to policy discourse. A corresponding micro approach examines the functioning of images as an integral part of a narrative in foreign policy formation constitutes a rarely taken path to the interpretation of policy formation.

2.2.2 Salience of Image Frames

Images convey information in a way different than text conveys information because the brain processes images faster and more comprehensively. "Visualization works from a human perspective because we respond to and process visual data better than any other type of data. The human brain processes images 60,000 times faster

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91 Shapiro, The Politics of Representation; der Derian, Virtuous War.
92 Hansen, Security as Practice.
93 Campbell, "Geopolitics and Visuality."
94 Rowling, "When Threats Are Internal."
95 Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, "None Dare Call It Torture"; Entman, "Punctuating the Homogeneity of Institutionalized News."
than text, and 90 percent of information transmitted to the brain is visual."\(^{97}\) Images establish frames differently from text because the brain processes information conveyed by images differently than information from text.

Gibson, writing about editing in an electronic age, argues that images not only attract attention to stories written in text, but pictures communicate specific stories more effectively than text\(^ {98}\) Most scholarly work studying mass media images emphasize textual analysis, with images constituting "photographic adornment of articles."\(^ {99}\) For example, early work on the importance of image in news presentation by Garcia and Stark,\(^ {100}\) Zillman et al.,\(^ {101}\) and by Wolf and Grotta,\(^ {102}\) examines the ability of photographs to draw attention to the text and ignores the salience of the image in telling a story itself.

Exposure to images interacts with viewer predispositions and values to activate mental frameworks on a broad scale.\(^ {103}\) Visual components of news stories facilitate the organization of information by people exposed to images.\(^ {104}\) Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm asserts that salient communication takes place through the venerable cultural practice of sharing stories, such that a good story will be more persuasive than a factual argument. Viewing an image activates neurons encoded for the substance depicted in the image. However, the limited number of available neurons functions so that any particular neuron serves as an item in other networks. "Because each neuron may be a part of many different systems of meaning, each activation potentiates the firing of other

\(^{97}\) Eisenberg, “Humans Process Visual Data Better.”
\(^{100}\) Garcia and Stark, *Eyes on the News*.
\(^{101}\) Zillmann, Knobloch, and Yu, “Effects of Photographs on the Selective Reading of News Reports.”
\(^{102}\) Wolf and Grotta, “Images.”
\(^{104}\) Fahmy, “Photojournalists’ and Photo Editors’ Attitudes and Perceptions.”
networks, resulting in widening circuitry and spiraling meaning."\(^{105}\) The coincidental firing of selected networked neurons creates meaning "when a match is found between incoming stimuli and experience stored in memory."\(^{106}\) The relationship between neural networks representing different objects simultaneously activates other networks, creating an association. Barry argues, "We are inclined to make associations that engage other clusters of neurons because whole networks are activated when parts are tapped."\(^{107}\) Viewing a movie poster, for example, may trigger memories of seeing the movie; encountering an image of an old kitchen may invoke a recollection of grandmother's kitchen; and noticing a photograph of a car activates anamnesis of automobile-related stunts.

Activation of pre-existing schema by resonant images significantly influences information storage, processing, and utilization. "News photos, among other visual representations, share the quality of iconicity, a resemblance to human experiential reality that affirms meaning for viewers."\(^{108}\) Visual frames employed by news media constitute a fundamental component in the process of organizing information by readers. Images often constitute the first element of a story encountered by a reader.\(^{109}\) Consumers of news media scan rather than read. Photographs and other images capture attention and tease a user to consider reading the story, effecting a transition from scanning to reading, thereby serving as an entry point to textual material.\(^{110}\) "Readers usually enter the page through the dominant photo and then move to a prominent

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\(^{105}\) Barry, "Perceptual Aesthetics," 139.
\(^{107}\) Barry, "Perceptual Aesthetics," 139.
\(^{108}\) Edwards, "Visual Literacy and Visual Politics."
\(^{109}\) Garcia, *Contemporary Newspaper Design*.
\(^{110}\) Garcia and Stark, *Eyes on the News*. 
headline or another dominant photo.”"111 Viewers of news web pages employ scanning strategies to a greater extent than readers of newspapers (56% vs. 45%).112 Since "net paper readers go deeper into articles than newspaper readers" and "visit much fewer and more specialized texts," graphics function as a significant entryway in the online environment.113

News reports framed episodically influence the assignation by readers of responsibility for crime and terrorism, among other issues.114 An episodic news frame "takes the form of a case study or event-oriented report and depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances" while a thematic framing "places public issues in some more general or abstract context ... directed at general outcomes or conditions."115 Visuals, especially still pictures, tend to result in episodic frames because they depict a specific moment in time that precludes a contextual approach to an issue. Embedding reporters in military units, for example, results in episodic image framing due to the greater availability of visuals depicting specific events.116

The ability of images to establish a persistent frame strongly influences public understanding of an issue.117 The use of images educates and mobilizes readers. Conversely, the persuasive power of images can distort public perception. For example, Secretary of State Colin Powell used satellite images of military sites to convince the U.N. Security Council in 2003 that Iraqi’s possessed weapons of mass destruction.118

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112 Holmqvist et al., “Reading or Scanning? A Study of Newspaper and Net Paper Reading.”
113 Holmqvist et al., 669.
114 Iyengar, Is Anyone Responsible?
115 Iyengar, 14.
116 King and Lester, “Photographic Coverage During the Persian Gulf and Iraqi Wars in Three Us Newspapers.”
118 Kilker, “All About Whom?”
Secretary Powell later characterized the misinterpretation of the photos as a "great intelligence failure." More recently, the examination of videos and pictures forced a reversal of condemnation directed at students from Covington Catholic High School accused of confronting a Native American activist in front of Lincoln Memorial. The denunciation, based in part on a widely circulated photograph of a student "whose frozen smile struck some as nervousness and others as arrogance," became untenable when other images emerged that both provided context and failed to corroborate allegations made against the students. Images functioned as a vital component to mislead the public in both the Powell and Covington High School examples. The images, though powerful, incorrectly communicated information about issues. The pictures, at a minimum, placed issues on the public agenda by illustrating contentious issues, even where they did not move the public to action.

2.2.3 Image Frames Do Not Function Like Textual Frames

Visual frames operate in a distinctively different manner than frames set textually. The constraints of a two-dimensional image tightly focus an idea to the exclusion of competing views. A tight focus on the point of view combines with pre-existing schema in the viewer's brain to significantly influence emotional and political responses. As a result, frames constructed by images constitute elementary formulations recalled without effort. Images encode and decode as concrete elements of reality (rather than the semiotic process related to text), so viewers interpret pictures

119 Breslow, “Colin Powell: U.N. Speech 'Was A Great Intelligence Failure.'”
120 Miller, “Viral Standoff between a Tribal Elder and a High Schooler Is More Complicated than It First Seemed.”
121 O’Neill and Nicholsen-Cole, “‘Fear Won’t Do It’: Promoting Positive Engagement With Climate Change Through Visual and Iconic Representations.”
122 Fahmy, “Contrasting Visual Frames of Our Times.”
123 Barnett and Reynolds, Terrorism and the Press.
124 Iyer et al., “Understanding the Power of the Picture.”
125 Iyer et al.
as actual world events that elicit emotional responses. As with all images, photographic representations function as a way for viewers to index reality and later recall it. Amit, Algom, and Trope explain:

Pictures bear physical similarity to the referent objects, and as a result, pictures are subject to (largely) the same perceptual processes that are applied to the referent objects. Because pictures are such high-fidelity icons, they are also as specific, concrete, and particular as objects in nature are. Words do not bear physical similarity to the referent objects and are not subjected to perceptual analysis. A word denotes a larger set of referent objects than does a picture. Each word is actually a category, whereas a picture can often form a singular representation.

In other words, the brain processes images by adapting techniques usually employed to perceive the real world. Users differentially acquire information from textual and iconic sources: “Pictures are received information. We need no formal education 'to get the message.' The message is instantaneous. Writing is perceived information. It takes time and specialized knowledge to decode the abstract symbols of language.” Frames set by images exhibit an immediacy that impacts the viewer more

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127 Messaris and Abraham, “The Role of Images in Framing News Stories.”
128 Amit, Algom, and Trope, “Distance-Dependent Processing of Pictures and Words,” 401.
129 McCloud, Understanding Comics, 49.
than textual frames. Differential processing of images and texts imbues images, especially pictures, with a high degree of persuasive salience.

Images and text differ in four dimensions: feature sharing with the referent, perceptual analysis, the size of the perceived referent set, and cognitive organization of the representation.\(^{130}\) Pictures, especially photographs, induce a perception that they approximate reality more concretely than words. The induction occurs because features in the pictorial representation cohere with the referent, as the picture sufficiently resembles the object to be treated identically with the object.

An image communicates a smaller set of ideas than the set elicited by words. When presented with the word "house," for example, a group of readers will not apprehend identical mental pictures, but a picture of a house constrains viewers' perceptions to a single object. Differences between perceptual analysis and cognitive organization of representation have consequences for framing. Viewers accept visual frames with minor criticism and stronger convictions than textual frames because visually presented information substantially influences attitudes about events and individuals.\(^{131}\) Agonistic visuals – those that dramatize victimization, either actual or impending – direct attention to accompanying text with greater salience than innocuous images because they induce perceptions of newsworthiness in readers and because readers experience increased ability to recall the story.\(^{132}\) The persistence of accessibility in the mind of viewers exposed to images results in a more significant influence on the formation of beliefs about issues than does text.\(^{133}\)

\(^{130}\) Amit, Algom, and Trope, “Distance-Dependent Processing of Pictures and Words.”


\(^{132}\) Zillmann, Knobloch, and Yu, “Effects of Photographs on the Selective Reading of News Reports.”

\(^{133}\) Zillmann and Brosius, *Exemplification in Communication*; Gollust, Eboh, and Barry, “Picturing Obesity.”
Belief in the truthfulness of information communicated by images, combined with the ability of images to activate schema used to organize information, makes pictures particularly adept at manipulating beliefs. Doctored images, for example, competently alter both collective and personal memories.\textsuperscript{134} The use of images by media demonstrates the effect. Photographs accompanying a news article containing false information, even when the picture itself accurately differs from the text, reinforce belief in the truth of the article.\textsuperscript{135} The inclusion of an image makes the viewer more inclined to accept a frame, although inculcated beliefs persist. Newsreaders employ photographs in the formation of memory about reports to the extent that "the careless use of photographs can lead to gross misperceptions of the issues covered in news reports."\textsuperscript{136}

Another significant difference between textual frames and visual frames in print media relates to selecting images. Someone other than the journalist writing the piece usually chooses photographs accompanying a textual story. Major news organizations assign image selection to the editorial jurisdiction of specialist photography editors or to newsroom editors responsible for the overall composition of the newspaper.\textsuperscript{137} Images selected for publication by newspaper picture editors exhibit significant bias congruent with editorial positions taken by the papers in political elections.\textsuperscript{138} The selection of photographs profoundly influences reader attitudes toward a particular story.\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{134} King, \textit{The Commissar Vanishes}; Wade et al., “A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Lies”; Lindsay et al., “True Photographs and False Memories.”
\textsuperscript{135} Strange et al., “Photographs Cause False Memories for the News.”
\textsuperscript{138} Barrett and Barrington, “Bias in Newspaper Photograph Selection.”
Juxtaposition of text and image changes a reader’s interpretation of text. Zillman, Gibson, and Sargent warned after reviewing the literature in light of their experimental results:

Photographers, reporters, layout artists, and editors must be cognizant of the fact that their choices of photographs may have considerable impact on how readers will view the issue addressed in print news reports. These professionals must learn to place the likely influence of image content above other considerations, such as aesthetics of the layout. Second, these professionals must make efforts to balance the photographic content of news reports, presenting visual documentation for all sides involved in an issue. To do otherwise could have strong unintended effects on the newspaper readers’ perceptions of reality and thus could reduce the overall accuracy of reporting.140

In an increasingly image-centric age, journalism professionals must pay attention to the effects of images on the interpretation of textual material. The existence of an image alters the interpretation of a text and may be the only information that a hurried reader captures from a story.

2.2.4 The Need to Study the Role of Visuals in Foreign Policy Formation

Since visuals communicate by a different process than text, their role in foreign policy can be assumed to be different from text. However, the Cascade Activation Model assumes that actors employ text- and image-set frames identically. The difference between image and text leads to the general question of whether images perform in unexpected ways in cascades. The general question explored in this study is how images function in Cascading Activation Models.

The hierarchy inherent in Cascading Activation Models reflects the relative power of actors. The U.S. Constitution distributes foreign policy responsibilities between Legislative and Executive branches without establishing either as primary. The resulting structure invites contestation in foreign policy.141 Cascading Activation Models reflect the Constitutional distribution of responsibilities for foreign policy. Moreover, applying constitutional provisions to Cascading Activation broadens traditional understanding of constitutional foreign policy roles by forcing consideration of the role of media, principally through the First Amendment, and of the citizenry, through the Fourteenth Amendment.

Corwin observed that the failure of the Constitution to state whether Congress or the President controls foreign policy invites discord.142 Conflict resolves in a discursive communication process modeled by the Cascade Activation Models. Legal scholars approach the influence of the Constitution on foreign policy as a dyadic practice. The

141 Corwin et al., The President.
142 Corwin et al.
application of CNAM to Constitutional scholarship on foreign policy formation incorporates the roles of media and citizens as vital to the debate.

2.3 Significance of Studying Image Frames Resulting from Benghazi Attacks

2.3.1 Influence on Diplomacy

Media reaction to the Benghazi attacks constitutes a significant unstudied foreign policy issue. The death of an ambassador rarely occurs, and even ten years later, it remains a significant element in political and policy discourse. The singularity of the attacks in Benghazi on September 11-12, 2012, suggests that studying it contributes significantly to understanding communication and the formation of foreign policy. In the history of the Foreign Service, eight ambassadors died on duty, seven of them as a result of violence.143 Five ambassadors died during the 1970s. Thirty years elapsed between the last ambassadorial death (Adolph Dubs, in Afghanistan) and the death of Ambassador Christopher Stevens. See Table 3.3.

The extraordinary assaults on apparent U.S. diplomatic facilities by "a group of heavily armed men ... with the only intention of killing as many people as possible" subverted the diplomatic paradigm.144 According to Priego, two enduring consequences emerge from the attacks: "The Benghazi attack has revolutionized terrorism against diplomatic delegations" and resulted in the inevitable response, "Focusing on the Benghazi case, this terrorist attack has revolutionized diplomatic security."145 Changes in security protocols emerged because significant long-term damage from a terror act

145 Priego, 108.
emanates not from the attack itself but repetitive and continuing media reporting of the event.\textsuperscript{146} Benghazi created an inflection point demarcating an escalation in tactics employed by terror organizations and innovation in defensive responses to the new tactics.

The conduct of diplomacy by the State Department changed radically as a result of Benghazi. The attacks in Benghazi reinforced a developing tendency of American diplomats to work from within embassy compounds rather than out among the population of the host country. "Benghazi cloistered U.S. diplomats," according to Gramer.\textsuperscript{147} Gramer reported that "ever-stricter security measures that U.S. diplomats face in unstable countries abroad, including bunker-like embassy compounds and limits on diplomats’ ability to get out of the bubble, which accelerated after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the deadly 2012 attack in Benghazi" significantly altered the U.S. approach to diplomacy.\textsuperscript{148} An American Academy of Diplomacy investigation found that "U.S. diplomatic and USAID development officers are rarely allowed to travel to meet sources, colleagues, or counterparts in less than fully secured areas or make unscheduled moves.... Requests by Foreign Service Officers to discreetly meet with subjects and sources or to review remote programs are too often denied, and the ability to observe and report on a country they are expected to know with a high level of expertise is severely limited."\textsuperscript{149} The Academy concludes," In short, the formulation and execution of national security policy is hindered by the lack of access to foreign contacts at higher-threat missions."\textsuperscript{150}

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\textsuperscript{146} Betus, Jablonski, and Lemieux, “Terrorism and Intergroup Communication.”
\textsuperscript{147} Gramer, “New Bill Takes Aim at State Department’s ‘Bunker Mentality.’”
\textsuperscript{148} Gramer.
\textsuperscript{150} American Academy of Diplomacy, 5.
\end{flushleft}
The ability of the U.S. to defend itself degraded as a direct result of the State Department's response to Benghazi.

2.3.2 Influence on Diplomatic Training and Military Preparedness

As a direct result of the Benghazi attacks, the State Department revamped its Diplomatic Security training curriculum. Diplomatic Security agents now receive realistic training based upon threats encountered in Benghazi. The State Department built a 1,350 acre Foreign Affairs Security Training Center at Fort Pickett, Virginia, to facilitate the new training regime. The training center includes a fake city, known as the Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) simulator, "an eerily vacant mock town complete with alleys, neighborhoods, a life-size U.S. embassy compound, and speakers blaring the sounds of tanks, animals, or New York traffic." A "smokehouse" facilitates training of techniques to escape burning buildings.

Simultaneously, the Department of Defense sought to reconstitute military tactics involving rapid deployment forces to protect diplomatic facilities and personnel. The attack "was a wake-up call for U.S. Africa Command, which lacked its own forces at the ready to send in an emergency." Mindful of their inability to respond to a foreseeable crisis in Benghazi, Army and Marine organized units dedicated to a protection mission. The Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force - Crisis Response assigned to Africa Command includes 1000 Marines with six MV-22B Ospreys and two KC-130J Hercules.

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151 Lenthang, “The Fake Town in Virginia Built by the State Department Where Diplomatic Special Agents Train to Defend Us Embassies and American Citizens from Attacks Across the Globe”; Adams, “To Train Foreign Service Agents, You Must Build a Fake Town.” The center is the largest law enforcement training facility in the country.
152 Adams, “To Train Foreign Service Agents, You Must Build a Fake Town”; Lenthang, “The Fake Town in Virginia Built by the State Department Where Diplomatic Special Agents Train to Defend Us Embassies and American Citizens from Attacks Across the Globe.”
tanker aircraft for transport to reinforce embassy security anywhere in North Africa with a few hours.\textsuperscript{154} The Army created the East Africa Response Force, based in Djibouti, as its regional rapid deployment operation.\textsuperscript{155} The new forces participated in evacuations of the U.S. Embassy Tripoli, the 2013 evacuation from the embassy in Juba, South Sudan, the partial evacuation of the embassy in Baghdad, and an attempted evacuation of U.S. citizens from Bor.\textsuperscript{156}

\textit{2.3.3 Influence on Congress}

The extraordinary attack in Benghazi evoked an unprecedented political response. Although the attack took place near the end of the 2012 Presidential election campaign, it did not have an apparent effect on the outcome 52 days later. Republican strategists, however, sought to use the circumstances surrounding the attacks and the responses to it against Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the presumptive 2016 Democratic nominee. All Congressional hearings ended finding no fault with actions taken by Secretary Clinton except for the House Select Committee, which contrived to have her testify before them on live television amid the 2016 campaign. The House Select Committee investigation ended one month after the election of Donald Trump.\textsuperscript{157}

Congress displayed a fascination of historic proportions with the Benghazi attacks. They involved ten committees or subcommittees that called 252 witnesses over 62 hours of hearings (see Table 3.6). The House Select Committee on Benghazi investigation of 4 deaths engaged 46 professional staffers to interview 107 witnesses in

\textsuperscript{154} Egnash, "Legacy of Benghazi: Marine Force Stays Ready for Quick Africa Deployment."

\textsuperscript{155} Lamothe, "Marines' Post-Benghazi Forces Rescue Embassy Personnel — and Show Up the Army."


\textsuperscript{157} von Rennenkampff, “Throw the GOP's Benghazi Playbook at Trump’s Catastrophic Coronavirus Response.”
868 days of hearings. By contrast, the 9/11 hearings into the deaths of 2,977 people, previously the most prolonged Congressional investigation prior to Benghazi, lasted 310 days (see Tables 3.7 and 3.8). The House Select Committee investigation related to Benghazi cost $8 million.158

2.3.4 Influence on Presidential Elections

Benghazi also appeared to have influenced the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Relentless attacks on Secretary Clinton employing a scandal narrative undermined her campaign. Entman's comparison of 9/11 with Benghazi concluded, "In contrast, considerations of culpability for Benghazi persisted, resulting in serious damage to Hillary Clinton's political career."159 Russia promoted the scandal narrative. Russian troll farms, internet groups formed to influence public opinion through the publication of misinformation or disinformation, broadcast allegations against Secretary Clinton subsequently repeated by opposition campaign officials with the intent of influencing the outcome of the election.160 Through its Internet Research Agency, Russia ran ads on Facebook and Instagram condemning the Democratic candidate for her handling of Benghazi, among other attacks.161

The specter of Benghazi also haunted the 2020 election. Democratic nominee Joe Biden considered selecting Susan Rice, the U.N. Ambassador during the Benghazi attacks, as his running mate.162 The possibility of re-awakening the dormant Benghazi

158 Benghazí Research Center, “Benghazi: By the Numbers.”
159 Entman and Stonbely, “Blunders, Scandals, and Strategic Communication in U.S. Foreign Policy: Benghazí vs. 9/11,” 12; Dewberry, “From Benghazí to E-Mails: Two Sides of the Same Scandal.”
162 Hirsh, “The Risks of Susan Rice.”
scandal led Adam Raymond in New York Magazine to prophesize, "Are we going to have to relitigate Benghazi if he picks Rice? Apparently yes." Even after the election, the prospect of re-opening Benghazi resulted in President Biden appointing Rice, a foreign policy expert, to head the domestic policy staff in the White House instead of as Secretary of State. If nominated to State, "She likely would have faced opposition from Republicans in Congress over her role in a controversy over the deadly 2012 attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya." The Director of the Domestic Policy Council, unlike the Secretary of State, does not need approval by the Senate.

2.3.5 Influence on Political Communication

Media response to the Benghazi attacks constitutes an essential element because political communication radically changed after the event. Reference to Benghazi now functions as a benchmark in political discourse denoting a belief, supported by evidence or not, of mismanagement or dereliction of duty by a political actor that requires official review. Over time political use of the term “Benghazi” became polysemic, evolving from a specific negative reference regarding the investigation of official mismanagement to concepts ranging from misconduct to the use of extensive investigatory hearings for political purposes, much like the term “Watergate” and the derivative suffix “-gate” transformed from denoting a government scandal to coding for any scandal. A study that explores the genesis of a term frequently employed in contemporary political discourse significantly expands understanding of the mechanisms of political speech.

164 Lewis, “U.S. Foreign Policy Veteran Susan Rice Tapped for Biden Domestic Policy Role.”
165 See research by David Wilkins of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics referenced in Boyd and Richerson, “Meme Theory Oversimplifies How Culture Changes.”
“Benghazi” persists as a political archetypal touchstone in multiple contexts. Former Senator Claire McCaskill characterizes the magnitude of the controversy engendered by the failure of the Trump administration to investigate claims that Russian troops received bounties for killing American soldiers as "This makes Benghazi look like playing with toys." By contrast, Senator Lindsey Graham invoked Benghazi to defend President Trump, arguing, "Obama was briefed and went to bed and never called anybody for a day and a half while our people were being slaughtered in Benghazi." The Trump administration invoked Benghazi to justify killing Qasem Soleimani, commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard–Quds Force, in a drone strike. "Trump retweeted a claim that Soleimani had orchestrated the 2012 attack on diplomats in Benghazi" even though both the 9/11 Commission and the House Select Committee found no participation by Iran or the Quds Force.

Actors invoke the new political benchmark in a variety of contexts, such as coronavirus policy ("throw the GOP’s Benghazi playbook at Trump’s coronavirus response"), the Justice Department investigation of Trump ties to Russia ("notable similarities over how the Mueller and Benghazi probes transformed into political flashpoints"), the deaths of four elite American soldiers in northwest Africa ("Benghazi on steroids"), the deaths of soldiers searching for a missing soldier in

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166 Dibble, "Ex-Democratic Senator Says Russia Bounty Controversy Makes ‘Benghazi Look Like Playing with Toys.’"
167 Wilstein, "Lindsey Graham Uses Benghazi to Defend Trump on Russian Bounties."
168 Dickinson, "Trump and Pence Demand Trust, Then Lie, Blaming Soleimani For Benghazi and 9/11: We’ve Seen This before. It Ends Terribly."
169 von Rennenkampf, "Throw the GOP’s Benghazi Playbook at Trump’s Catastrophic Coronavirus Response."
Afghanistan ("a cover up just like Benghazi"), and even a commuter train stall ("the lack of credible information from the conductor is 'just like Benghazi'").

The January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol inevitably prompted comparisons to the Benghazi attacks, starting with the mundane (five people died on January 6; four in Benghazi) to the momentous (politicians revising their positions much as they charged that Obama officials did after Benghazi). The Independent (U.K.) urged Speaker Nancy Pelosi to constitute a Benghazi-style investigation into the Capitol attack "subjecting former President Trump to eight hours of questioning." The Benghazi attacks likewise revolutionized criminal probes into mass crimes. The FBI used techniques developed in the Benghazi investigation to link cell phone location data to photographs of suspects to determine the identity of Capitol invaders.

2.3.6 Academic Inattention to Benghazi Attack Influences

The Benghazi attack - an event that changed the U.S. conduct of diplomacy, changed military and diplomatic security paradigms, prompted unprecedented Congressional inquiry, introduced new crime investigation techniques, altered political rhetoric in the U.S., created a persistent political communication meme, and influenced three Presidential elections – aroused little academic interest.

The only two published studies of media coverage of the attack limit their analysis to assignations of blame. Entman and Stonbely draws contrast Benghazi being framed as a scandal with the treatment of 9/11 as a non-scandal despite reported

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173 MacGillis, “This Is What Life in a Plutocracy Looks Like.”
174 Saletan, “Republicans Are Tough on Terrorism Until the Terrorists Are Republicans”; Trew, “We All Deserve Better Than Comparing the Riots at the US Capitol to Events in the Middle East.”
175 Selinger, “Nancy Pelosi's Commission Should Do to Trump What Republicans Did to Hillary Clinton.”
176 Timberg, Harwell, and Hsu, “Think Rioters Walked Away Scot Free? Not so Fast, Say Police with Potent Technology Ready to Name Names.”
"revelations about neglected pre-9/11 intelligence warnings" and a neglected Presidential Daily Brief analysis "headed 'Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.'."\(^{177}\) Entman and Stonbely create a corpus of 406 Benghazi-related articles appearing in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *NBC Nightly News* starting the day after the attack and ending after Secretary Clinton’s Congressional testimony in 2015, as well as an additional 365 articles in the corpus related to 9/11. Manual editing of the corpus eliminated stories that did not directly address blame assigned to "a specific person or entity."\(^ {178}\) Entman and Stonbely circumscribe their Benghazi press analysis to a text-based analysis of the presumed existence of a scandal frame and to contrast with reporting after 9/11.

A similar comparative study by Just and Crigler considers media coverage of Abu Ghraib, NSA/Snowden, sexual assault in the military, and Benghazi. The Benghazi portion of the study coded 193 reports published by A.P., BBC, CBS, and Fox from the day after the attack until early 2014 for "the prevalence of the negative tone of scandal coverage, the extent of personalization, sensationalism, and the discussion of the ramifications of the scandals."\(^ {179}\) The study neither considers the substance of the reporting nor analyzes images.

Another report by the USC Center on Public Diplomacy in 2015 details the Obama administration’s efforts to contain political ramifications of Benghazi attack stories.\(^ {180}\) The study does not analyze media reporting. Instead, it limits its findings to those related to the contents of official messaging.

\(^ {177}\) Entman and Stonbely, “Blunders, Scandals, and Strategic Communication in U.S. Foreign Policy: Benghazi vs. 9/11,” 2.
\(^ {178}\) Entman and Stonbely, 6.
\(^ {179}\) Just and Crigler, “Media Coverage of Political Scandals,” 37–38. The article erroneously reports at p.37 that Benghazi is in Tunisia.
\(^ {180}\) Walker, *Benghazi: Managing the Message*. 
The majority of research related to events in Libya does not consider media coverage of the Benghazi attacks. Studies examining media bias in coverage of the Libya uprising do not analyze stories published after the death of Gaddafi in October 2011, almost a year before the attacks. Although Baum and Zhukov construct a dataset of 213,406 articles in 2,252 newspapers from December 2010 to October 2011, they do not analyze content; instead, they examine tendencies to under- or over-report certain events.\textsuperscript{181} Sumaya al Nahed perform a framing analysis comparing coverage of the Libyan uprising on two BBC and two Al Jazeera networks covering both Arabic and English contents.\textsuperscript{182} The analysis, which samples four weeks of stories between February 2011 and October 2011, does not extend to the dates of the attack in 2012, nor does it look at any images. Ireri similarly compares BBC and Al Jazeera’s framing of the uprising.\textsuperscript{183} Arif and Arman’s content analysis compares reporting on the Libya uprising by the New York Times and the Bangladesh Daily Star similarly uses a minimal sample (10 days) that neither includes the dates of the attack nor considers images in its analysis.\textsuperscript{184}

Images of the media’s coverage of the Libyan uprising forms the basis of several studies, but none consider the Benghazi attack. Gwen Bouvier’s essay on images printed in four British newspapers remains the only study explicitly analyzing the content of images from the Libyan uprising.\textsuperscript{185} It uses a dataset of 120 photographs from just one week in March 2011. Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, and Azran examine 1,380 images used by five

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Baum and Zhukov, “Filtering Revolution.”
\item Al Nahed, “Covering Libya.”
\item Ireri, “News from Tripoli, Benghazi, Brega and Misrata.”
\item Arif and Arman, “Media Framing of the Libyan Uprising.” Although the study purports to employ “text and visual analysis” nothing in the paper comments on images nor does it describe a methodology for visual analysis.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
news networks to illustrate Gaddafi’s death, but the analysis ends before the attacks at Benghazi.\textsuperscript{186} No study considers Benghazi attack images.

\textbf{2.3.7 Implications for Cascading Activation Foreign Policy Framing}

Significant enduring changes to foreign policy formation following the Benghazi attack render media coverage of it a compelling case study for evaluating Cascade Activation as a competent explanation of frame formation in the development of foreign policy. Entman proposes that substantive frames of the sort produced by Cascade Activation effect at least two of the four functions he attributes to frames: problem definition, conjecture as to causation, the promulgation of moral judgment about the issue, and advancing a solution.\textsuperscript{187} Media coverage during the first year after the Benghazi attack can be analyzed to determine whether images produced frames with any of these attributes and whether the frames themselves came into existence due to Cascading Activation.

A foreign policy discussion such as the controversy precipitated by the Benghazi attack in 2012 provides an opportunity to test assumptions inherent in the cascade models. The enormous number of images related to the Benghazi attacks – the entire first attack was captured on video from several surveillance cameras in the compound – creates a unique opportunity to trace whether media coverage of the attack and subsequent investigations reflect a functioning cascade.

\textbf{2.4 Research Questions}

This project analyzes frames created by images of the Benghazi attacks on United States, CIA, and associated facilities that used diplomatic cover. The analysis seeks to

\textsuperscript{186} Karniel, Lavie-Dinur, and Azran, “Broadcast Coverage of Gaddafi’s Final Hours in Images and Headlines.”

\textsuperscript{187} Entman, \textit{Projections of Power}, 5.
determine whether frame formation in the case study followed the three fundamental assumptions that underlies Entman's Cascade Activation models. More specifically, I ask:

R.Q. 1 Do visual frames originate at the media level of the cascade as theorized in the CAM/CNAM models?

R.Q. 2 Do hierarchical relationships between originators of images in the cascade exist in the same manner as theorized for text?

R.Q. 3 Can visual frames related to the Benghazi attacks be identified as predicted by Cascading Action Models?

3 THE LIBYAN CONUNDRUM AND ITS HOLD ON THE UNITED STATES

Understanding the long, unruly history of the area now known as Libya helps explain the complex and dynamic circumstances resulting in the September 11, 2012, attacks on two American bases in Benghazi. In many ways, the country in 2012 mirrored the Libya of antiquity: colonialism and lingering effects of colonial domination undermined any competence to participate in international affairs; internal cultural and religious factions both subverted allegiance to any sort of national governance and promoted localized conflict among clans; and perpetual conflict, whether with invaders or with neighbors, created a temperament of ongoing discord. Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, Carthaginians, Egyptians, British, Turks, Italians, Germans, Americans, and others fought over the area. Across the country - and across centuries - sects guarded their territory against encroachment by other groups. Campbell, quoting Human Rights Watch, explained that militias “mostly identified with their place of origin” because they
“organized around informal networks such as individual towns, companies, schools, former military units (in the case of defectors), or religious institutions to which members of the militia belonged.”188 If all politics is local, Libyan politics is hyper-local.

The different experience of Western observers, especially in America, constitutes a barrier to understanding Libyan political culture. The American experience does not encompass numerous invasions by foreign powers, domination by great empires, or constant internal armed rivalries. Exposure to the alien Libyan reality begins to render the culture accessible. Attempts to make Libya conform to a Western paradigm not only failed, but undermined analysis of Libyan actions. I will argue that the aftermath of attacks on American facilities in Benghazi rapidly devolved into extended domestic political squabbles rather than interrogating American policy toward Libya, investigating circumstances precipitating violence in Benghazi, or unraveling bedlam caused by terrorist groups moving into the country. Domestic American politics were more accessible to grasp than the chaos of Libya.

3.1 “A Functional Libyan State Has Never Really Existed.”189

Conflict and domination characterize Libyan history. As Metz wrote, “Until Libya achieved independence in 1951, its history was essentially one of tribes, regions, and cities, and of the empires of which it was a part.”190 Since antiquity, the areas later consolidated as Libya existed as a colony of one foreign entity or another. Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa, fought invaders, and invaders fought each other for control. Violence and assassination permeated political life and continued after the

188 Campbell, “Failure Begets Failure: The NATO Quagmire Consumes the U.S. Ambassador to Libya,” 201.
189 Byman and Brookings Institution, “Terrorism in North Africa: Before and After Benghazi.”
region consolidated and became self-governing. Separateness, clashing cultural
affinities, rivalries, disparate religious beliefs, and colonial domination have
undermined collaboration and unification. If a nation is an imagined community of
people identifying themselves as members of a group, as Benedict Anderson suggests, then Libya possessed an inability to imagine a commonality that might unite them.

In 1951 the nation of Libya formed from the unification of three culturally and
politically incompatible regions: Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and Fezzan. The regions
existed autonomously. Dirk Vandewalle outlined the essential character of each region:

Tripolitania’s cultural traditions and economy were largely
oriented toward the western part of the Maghreb (North
Africa) with whom it shared its Roman history. As a result of
its colonization by the Greeks, Cyrenaica’s equivalents were
largely those of countries east of its still undefined borders.
Fezzan remained a small, semi-nomadic and economically
barely self-sufficient society that, except for the caravan
trade, interacted overwhelmingly with sub-Saharan Africa.

The fierce independence of each region prevented Libya’s evolution into a state.
Only after the Italians in 1911 started mandating a unified administrative department
did the country of Libya emerge. Even then, internal conflict fueled by familial and tribal
conflicts and irreconcilable cultural differences among the three regions immediately
tore it apart.

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191 Anderson, Imagined Communities.
3.1.1 Roman, Greek, and Byzantium Colonization

Cyrenaica, which includes Benghazi, constituted an Italy-controlled administrative area between 1927 and 1943 and then a Britain-controlled area between 1943 and 1951 (see Table 2.1). The region had been home to an ancient people known as Berbers. The semi-nomadic Berbers occupied an area stretching from Egypt to the Atlantic coast. Throughout their history, Berbers subordinated any sense of nationhood to identity “in terms of their tribe, clan, and family.” Berbers raided their Egyptian neighbors, leading to regular warfare that resulted in Egyptian control over eastern Libya. Pharaohs of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (2200-1700 BCE) forced Libyan Berbers to pay tribute but gradually Berbers assimilated into Egyptian culture as Egypt expanded. The influence of Berbers in Egypt grew until they possibly dominated the 22d and 23rd dynasties (sometimes known as the Libyan dynasties) from about 945 to 730 BCE. At the same time, Phoenicians roaming the Mediterranean to pursue trade established relations with Berbers as early as the 12th century BCE. The Phoenician colony at Carthage settled three cities in what is now Libya: Oea (which became Tripoli),

196 Metz, 5.
Labdah, and Sabratah.\textsuperscript{197} The “area ... came to be known collectively as Tripolis, or “Three Cities.”\textsuperscript{198}

After Rome destroyed Carthage in 146 BCE after the interminable Punic Wars (264-241, 218-201, and 149-6 BCE), it awarded Tripolitania to an ally, the Berber king of Numidia.\textsuperscript{199} Home rule lasted 100 years, ending when Julius Caesar annexed most of the region to Rome to punish a Numidian king who had backed his rival Pompey.\textsuperscript{200}

In 631 BCE, across the Gulf of Sidra from Tripoli, Greeks established the city of Cyrene.\textsuperscript{201} The intellectual and economic prosperity of Cyrene inspired additional colonization. The Greeks created four more cities within the next 200 years, including

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{ Significant geographic locations in this study}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{197} St. John, \textit{Libya}, 2.
\textsuperscript{198} Metz, \textit{Libya: A Country Study}, 5.
\textsuperscript{200} Metz, \textit{Libya: A Country Study}, 5.
Eusperides, which much later became Benghazi. Although Greek colonies in Libya shared a common heritage, they functioned independently. “Often in competition, they found cooperation difficult even when confronted by common enemies.” Conquered Greek colonies formed the western extension of the Persian Empire for 200 years after falling to Persia in 525.

Libya’s enemies were abundant: Egypt to the east, Carthage to the west, and Persian invaders by sea. After the Persian Cyrus the Great subdued Egypt, he continued eastward and overran Cyrenaica. Persians or Egyptians remained in control for 200 years until the last Greek ruler ceded their holdings to Rome. By 74 BCE, Rome merged Cyrenaica with Crete into a province for administrative purposes. Cyrenaica prospered economically during Pax Romana even though political strife continued unabated, such as the major uprising by Jewish insurgents between 115 to 118 that spread across Egypt and Palestine after starting in Libya.

Diocletian ended the administrative consolidation of Cyrenaica and Crete in 300, at the same time dividing Cyrenaica into Upper Libya and Lower Libya. These new administrative areas marked the first political use of the tribal term “Libya.” The division of the Roman Empire by Theodosius in 395 resulted in Tripolitania remaining under Roman rule in a Western Empire, while the newly created Eastern Empire governed Cyrenaica and the remainder of eastern Libya. Roman authority in Tripolitania ended in 429 when the Vandals from Spain established a North African

\[\text{References:}\]

The Vandals launched attacks against Corsica, Sardinia, and Italy from Africa, including the invasion that resulted in the Sack of Rome (455). Western Libya did not prosper under the Vandals, nor did Eastern Libya prosper under Byzantine rule. As social order broke down, the population relied upon clans and tribes for governance and services. The absence of any functional unified national organization capable of defending the region opened the country to continued domination by foreign entities intent on exploiting Libya’s strategic placement in the Mediterranean.

**3.1.2 Ottoman Colonization**

Byzantium reasserted claims to eastern Libya in 533 and managed to rule until 640 when the Arab sweep across Africa threw them out. Arab armies emerged from Arabia to conquer Egypt, then Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, eventually westward to Morocco. The region experienced constant military conflict as Arab forces captured, but could not subdue, Berber clans fighting as insurgents. Arabs pillaged Cyrene near present-day Benghazi twice in 25 years, as they were incapable of consolidating power. Warfare intermittently continued even when Arabs finally dominated the region. Berbers repeatedly prevented Arabs from launching sustained military expeditions out of Tripolitania until 693, when assistance from dissident Berber tribes empowered Arab armies to conquer Carthage.

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212 Metz, 11; St. John, *Libya*, 5.
Gradually Arab rule took hold in Libya despite constant tribal rebellions. The Arabs brought prosperity and security, but distrust between Arabs and Berbers prevented the development of anything more than casual relationships. “While the Arabs abhorred the tribal Berbers as barbarians, the Berbers in the hinterland often saw the Arabs only as an arrogant and brutal soldiery bent on collecting taxes.”\textsuperscript{216} Caliphs in Damascus or Baghdad exerted their authority through appointed emirs, roughly the equivalent of a governing nobleman. Gradually emirs evolved into a hereditary office that professed allegiance to the caliph but functioned independently of it.\textsuperscript{217}

During the seventh century, the split of Islam into Sunni and Shia factions manifested in Libya, with Arabs aligning with Sunnis and everyone else, including Islamic Berbers, following the Shias. Berbers eventually attacked Arabs as part of the religious wars that extended into a conquest of Egypt completed in 969.\textsuperscript{218} In Cairo, the Shia caliph recruited as many as 200,000 Bedouin families that he dispersed throughout the Maghreb “like a ‘swarm of locusts’” destroying farms and towns in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.\textsuperscript{219} The Normans in Italy filled the commercial vacuum that arose after the immigrant invasion by establishing coastal trading posts west of Tripoli.\textsuperscript{220}

Berber dynasties arising out of Morocco extended their empire by conquering lands in the east, eventually banishing the Normans by 1160. The dynasties ended when they lost the support of Berber tribes in 1270.\textsuperscript{221} An attempt to set up a sultanate in the eastern portion of the former empire failed. “Theocratic republics, tribal states, and

\textsuperscript{216} Metz, 12.
\textsuperscript{217} Metz, 13.
\textsuperscript{218} Metz, 14; St. John, \textit{Libya}, 6.
\textsuperscript{220} Metz, \textit{Libya: A Country Study}, 15.
\textsuperscript{221} Metz, 16.
coastal enclaves seized by pirate captains defied the sultan's authority, and in 1460 the merchant oligarchy in the Tripoli declared independence as a city-state by its merchant oligarchy.”

Spain and the Ottoman Turks competed for power across the Mediterranean in the 16th century. Spain methodically seized African territories along the coast, finally capturing Tripoli in 1510. In 1551 the Ottomans yet again asserted sovereignty over North Africa. By 1565, Ottoman successes allowed them to divide the Maghreb into three parts, with a pasha ruling Tripoli until a coup in 1611. “Tripoli lapsed into period of military anarchy during which coup followed coup and few deys survived in office more than a year.” The pattern of domination by foreign powers combined with internal strife between clans continued to assert itself.

By the late 1700s, nominal Ottoman rule in Tripoli disintegrated, allowing the local pasha to vanquish native tribes and supplement income by extorting tribute from passing vessels, including merchant ships of the newly liberated United States. Ottoman sovereignty in Libya continued to wane. Vandewalle found that between 1835 and 1911, thirty-three different Ottoman appointees ruled because of the difficulty of “finding officials willing to devote their careers to managing territories that had consistently proven rebellious, difficult to govern, and economically of little importance to Constantinople.” Declining Ottoman interest in Libya opened the area to renewed Western colonization.

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222 Metz, 16; St. John, Libya, 7.
### 3.1.3 Italian Colonization

The three regions that eventually formed Libya constituted the only areas of North Africa that had yet to be colonized by a European power.\(^{227}\) Italy grabbed the opportunity to establish colonies just across the Mediterranean. It declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1910 and invaded Libya in 1911, seeking “outright annexation of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.”\(^{228}\) The Italians had not anticipated encountering fierce resistance. They had been “expecting to carry out a quick, overwhelming occupation of a long-coveted colony in North Africa” but instead, the “massive Italian army stalemated in Libya for a year as it faced a few thousand Turks and their indigenous allies.”\(^{229}\) The year presaged a decade of fierce fighting.\(^{230}\) The Ottomans gave up Libya in 1912, but the guerrilla resistance campaign persisted. Attempts by Italy in 1913 to occupy Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan failed, emboldening Turkey to appoint a governor of Tripolitania in 1915. The treaty between Italy and Turkey signed on October 18, 1918, acknowledged Italian control of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Tripolitania declared independence the following year.\(^{231}\)

Italy slowly consolidated its position in Libya. By royal decree in 1934, Italy imposed the name Libya.\(^{232}\) Italy felt it needed a colony to settle peasant farmers to alleviate unemployment during the worldwide depression.\(^{233}\) In 1938, 20,000 farmers emigrated to Libya in a 16 ship fleet, raising the Italian population to 110,000.\(^{234}\) Italy

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\(^{229}\) Herrmann, “The Paralysis of Italian Strategy in the Italian—Turkish War, 1911–1912,” 333.


\(^{231}\) Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*.

\(^{232}\) Reuters, “Factbox: Italy Compensates Its Former Colony Libya.” The 1934 decree represents the first political use of “Libya” as the name of the region. Reuters. The 1934 decree represents the first political use of “Libya” as the name of the region.

\(^{233}\) Segré, “Italo Balbo and the Colonization of Libya,” 142.

\(^{234}\) Segré, 141.
had drained swamps, built infrastructure, and organized farms in the seven preceding months. The settled provinces became counties of Italy.235 Even after the war, a 1950 report noted Italian residents “haven’t quite got used to the idea that they are no longer running the country.”236 Much later, Gaddafi obtained an agreement whereby “Italy will provide billions of dollars in investments and compensation for its colonial rule of the North African country.”237 Libya expelled and seized the property of the remaining Italian residents in 1970.238

World War II battles in Cyrenaica culminating in the defeat at al-Alamein in 1942 forced Italian settlers to leave Libya.239 The British Military Administration took over the governing role in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in 1943, while the French Military Administration governed Fezzan.240 Italy renounced claims to Libya in the Peace Treaty of 1947, which provided that “the final disposal of these colonies shall be made jointly by Russia, the United States, Great Britain, and France.”241 The United Nations fulfilled the disposal requirement on November 21, 1949, with the imposition of a trusteeship comprised of representatives of Egypt, France, Italy, Britain, Pakistan, and the United States, and four native members obliged to create an independent sovereign state under a constitution to be written by the Libyan National Assembly.242 On December 2, 1950,

235 Moore and Philipps, “Fourth Shore-Italy’s Mass Colonisation of Libya.”
236 Wechsberg, “Letter from Libya.”
237 Reuters, “Factbox: Italy Compensates Its Former Colony Libya.”
240 Vandewalle, A History of Modern Libya.
242 Wechsberg, “Letter from Libya.”
the National Assembly established the United Kingdom of Libya with Idris al-Sanusi as king. The Libyan kingdom declared itself an independent sovereign one year later.

3.1.4 Libyan Independence

Independent Libya did not fare well. It achieved milestones – the first general election on February 19, 1952, the first meeting of Parliament on March 25, 1952, membership in the Arab League on February 12, 1953, and joining the United Nations in 1953. Extreme squabbling during and after the 1952 general election resulted in a ban on political parties in the sovereign state. After the 1955 assassination of a royal family member in Benghazi, the regime became estranged from the populace. Increasingly, the mission of the Western powers in Libya “concentrated on keeping King Idris alive and in power.” The British, in particular, “found themselves engaged in low-intensity conflict with anti-regime groups and an Egyptian-backed plot to topple the monarchy.” King Idris “was not only authoritarian but was also corrupt” making it challenging to resolve political conflict. The political situation continued to deteriorate until September 1, 1969, when the Captain Muammar al Gaddafi-led military coup toppled the monarchy, with no objection from the United States.

Gaddafi went on to rule for more than 30 years. He maintained power by “carefully balancing and manipulating complex patronage networks, traditional tribal

246 Blackwell, “Saving the King,” 2.
247 Blackwell, 5.
structures and byzantine layers of national, regional, and local governance” while “not hesitating to crush coup attempts, assassinate dissidents abroad, or sponsor violent movements and terrorist attacks against Libya’s perceived external enemies.”

Instability based on cultural fragmentation, which had plagued the Libyan state since its founding in 1959, did not end with the overthrow of the monarchy but persisted through Gaddafi’s rule and beyond. From the beginning of the regime, Gaddafi used power and the country’s wealth to support an elite that knew few bounds. His sons became “internationally notorious for their extravagant spending in locales like St. Barts, London, Paris, Rome, and Venice.” The dissonance between tribes, as well as unconcealed corruption, resulted in constant challenges to his rule.

Gaddafi survived coup attempts in 1980, 1986, 1993, and 1996. All of these attempts began in the military. CIA records contain a Wall Street Journal article in 1986 which reported that “Analysts at the CIA, the Pentagon, the State Department, and the White House all believe Mr. Gaddafi is losing touch with the military, even with many of the officers who helped him seize power in 1969.” For example, in 1993, army units attempted to overthrow the government, only to find themselves decimated by Gaddafi’s air force. The army again provoked the 1996 coup. As long as Gaddafi retained the loyalty of elites in the military, large demonstrations and military revolts would never reach a critical mass sufficient to oust him for power.

251 Blanchard and Zanotti, 12; Metz, Libya: A Country Study, 49.
255 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, “Top Secret Supplement to the Current Intelligence Digest (Declassified August 31, 2001).”
Acts of terror against internal dissension mirrored Gaddafi’s behavior towards the international community. Libya under Gaddafi embarked on a program of international terrorism, such as the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103, UTA Flight 772, TWA Flight 840, and bombing Berlin’s La Belle Discotheque nightclub filled with U.S. troops. Gaddafi’s Libya may have also backed an attack on a synagogue in Istanbul and bombings in Paris. According to Ferris, “Each year, Libya trained 8,000 terrorists, providing false passports, transports on Libyan airliners, and access to safe houses across Europe.” The expanding scope of Libyan support for terror set the stage for military conflict between Libya and the West. In short, terrorism became the basis of Libya’s international identity. “Without terrorism, Libya would not draw much attention.” Violence became a critical apparatus of both internal and external policy.


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3.2 Relations Between the United States and Libya

Diplomatic relations between the United States and Libya constitute two chief periods separated by 160 years. The first, starting with the appointment of a consul to Tripoli in 1797 and encompassing the Barbary Wars, between 1801 and 1815. The U.S. Congress ordered the consulate closed in 1882. The United States and Libya had no diplomatic relations for the next 60 years.

The second period began in 1948 when the U.S. opened a consulate in Tripoli to promote the development of Wheelus Air Force Base (AFB) outside of Tripoli and act as a check on Soviet and Egyptian efforts to control Libya. The U.S. credentialed a series of consulates and legations starting in 1948 but did not have an embassy in Libya until 1954. Libya never had diplomatic representation in Washington before 1954, with its legation promoted to an embassy the following year.

3.2.1 First Interact: “To the Shores of Tripoli”

The Barbary Wars (1801-1805, 1815) resulted from the United States’ refusal to continue required treaty-based payments begun in 1786 with various states in North Africa in return for safe passage of American commercial vessels. By 1797, the payments constituted a fifth of the U.S. budget. British tribute payments that had protected American shipping ended when Britain recognized American independence by signing the Treaty of Paris in 1783. In October 1784, the Barbary pirates snatched an American merchant brig, Betsey, followed by the capture of two other vessels after the ransoming of Betsey’s crew.

263 Calhoun, Cosmopolitanism and Belonging, 187; Salus, “The U.S. Marine Corps as National Myth.”
265 Turner, “President Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates.”
America had disbanded its Continental Navy at the end of the Revolutionary War forcing Congress, in 1797, to fund the construction of six heavy frigates to protect American shipping. The Barbary Wars resulted in the formation of a permanent Navy and the second line of the Marine Hymn (“The shores of Tripoli” alludes to the battle at Derna in Cyrenaica.)

Max Boot argues that the Marine engagement at Derna marked the beginning of the U.S. quest to be an international player. “[T]he seeds of American power had been sown.” The first international excursion by U.S. military power established a precedent for centuries of subsequent wars.

On November 4, 1796, the US concluded a treaty with the pasha of Tripoli, which provided, among many other things, that neither party would henceforth pay periodic tribute, although the pasha still accepted 40,000 Spanish dollars, watches, rings, and the like. James Leander Cathcart, appointed as consul to Tripoli in July 1797, delivered an additional 12,000 Spanish dollars, artillery, and commodities under a side agreement obligating every new U.S. consul to bring such booty.

Foreshadowing Libyan negotiations with the United States 150 years later, the Barbary States demanded additional tribute “despite clear provisions of the treaty” after the pasha “expressed displeasure that the other Barbary leaders received nicer gifts.” The pasha renounced the treaty and declared war on May 10, 1801.

The war did not go well for the Libyans. Naval victories in 1801 and 1802, a 500-mile desert crossing by US Marines leading more than 600 Arab and Greek mercenaries into Tripolitania, and an effective blockade forced the pasha to negotiate. The treaty,

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266 Kelly, “Kill the Pirates: As the Marines Demonstrated Long Ago, There’s Only One Way to End Piracy.”
268 Calhoun, *Cosmopolitanism and Belonging*.
269 Turner, “President Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates.”
270 Turner, 159.
approved by the US Senate on April 12, 1806, provided that no annual tribute would be paid again.\textsuperscript{271}

\textbf{3.2.2 Second Interact: The United States Returns to Libya}

The strategic significance of North Africa in defense of Europe became apparent during World War II.\textsuperscript{272} Following the war, Libya sought to monetize the importance of its position in the Mediterranean. The country played Britain and the United States against the Soviet Union and all three nations against Egypt. “Libya in the late 1950s was the location of an intense conflict for influence between Nasser, the Soviet Union and the Western powers.”\textsuperscript{273} Libya became the focus of Western efforts to counter the rise of Arab nationalism as espoused in Cairo.\textsuperscript{274} The Soviet Union’s denied claim to act as the United Nations trustee over Tripolitania motivated Britain and US to invest monumental amounts of aid in “an unblushing venture of military and economic imperialism.”\textsuperscript{275} Libya traded ambassadors for the first time with the Soviet Union in 1955 and considered accepting Soviet economic aid the following year.\textsuperscript{276} By contrast, the U.S. consulate, which opened in 1948, did not become an embassy until 1969.

The presence of British and American military buttressed the regime of King Idris against internal and external threats. “British military intelligence sources continued to warn that Egyptian and Soviet subversion posed a major threat to the Libyan regime.”\textsuperscript{277} The United States, as the decade progressed, began to waiver in its commitment to the country. “The State Department in particular increasingly felt that Anglo-American

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{271}Turner, “President Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates.”
\textsuperscript{272}Wechsberg, “Letter from Libya.”
\textsuperscript{273}Blackwell, “Saving the King,” 1.
\textsuperscript{274}Blackwell, 4.
\textsuperscript{275}Louis, \textit{The British Empire in the Middle East}, 305.
\textsuperscript{276}Blackwell, “Saving the King,” 4.
\textsuperscript{277}Blackwell, 10.
\end{footnotesize}
military presence in the country was anomalous” given the tide of nationalism rising throughout the Arab world, including in Libya.278

Nationalists pointed to Wheelus Air Force Base as a nagging symbol of colonialism. In January 1923, the Italians built an airfield, Mehalla Air Base, later used by the Luftwaffe during World War II. The British Eighth Army captured the airfield in 1943 and turned it over to the American Army, which changed the name in 1945.279 The US Army closed Wheelus in 1947, reopened it a year later, and by the early 1950s operated it as a base for nuclear bombers.280 During negotiations between Libya and the United States in 1952 for the lease on the massive base — “a Little America ... on the sparkling shores of the Mediterranean”281 — Libya suddenly demanded $2 million although it had already agreed to half that amount.282 The U.S. paid.

Anti-American sentiment in Libya focused on Wheelus. For example, the CIA advised in the June 5, 1967, President’s Daily Brief, “The US Embassy in Benghazi flashed word at 4:30 am EDT that it was being attacked by a large mob. It is burning its papers.”283 The brief reported that Egyptian pressure for nationalist sentiments in the Arab world had resulted in calls for the closure of Wheelus AFB. Gaddafi ordered the U.S. out of the airbase in 1970. “After renaming it Uqba Bin Nafi Air Base, Tripoli invited Soviet forces to occupy the base, which they did.”284 The departure of U.S. troops, however, did not end protests.

278 Blackwell, 14.
279 Boyne, “The Years of Wheelus.”
280 Blackwell, “Saving the King,” 3; Wechsberg, “Letter from Libya.”
282 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, “Top Secret Supplement to the Current Intelligence Digest (Declassified August 31, 2001).”
By the time Gaddafi overthrew the government in 1969, intercontinental ballistic missiles had replaced bombers as the U.S. strategic weapon of choice, eliminating Libya’s geographical location as an asset. Oil replaced geography as the nexus of U.S.-Libyan relations. Libya discovered that it possessed the largest oil reserves in Africa, eventually generating 2% of world production. Scrap metal had been the largest export commodity before the discovery of oil. Worldwide demand for petrochemicals created an opportunity for Gaddafi to become internationally relevant. Zoubir points out that “from 1959, when Libya became an oil producer, until 1986 US oil companies, such as Esso, made considerable profits” but “the country’s wealth did not benefit Libyans at large.” Partial nationalization of oil reserves in 1970 exacerbated wealth disparity, as Gaddafi used oil wealth to build houses and other infrastructure, but discriminated against eastern Libya. In addition to internal conflict based on poverty and tribal animosity, Libya became embroiled in external conflict. International terrorism activities provoked military responses. Table 3.1 lists American military operations against Gaddafi-ruled Libya. The U.S. Navy shot down attacking Libyan aircraft in 1981 and 1989, as well as sinking two threatening Libyan ships, disabling three others, and destroying anti-aircraft missile bases in 1986. On April 14, 1986, the US Air Force, in Operation El Dorado Canyon, bombed two targets in Benghazi and three in Tripoli, including the former Wheelus Air Force Base. Within the military, El

285 Boyne, “The Years of Wheelus.”
288 Schumacher, “The United States and Libya,” 331.
Dorado Canyon was “understood to have primarily been an assassination attempt on Gaddafi using the pretext of broader air strikes.”\textsuperscript{292} Operation Odyssey Dawn, the U.S. portion of the 2011 NATO military intervention in Libya, began with an air attack to suppress air defenses supporting a no-fly zone.\textsuperscript{293}

Table 3.1 American Military Operations against Gaddafi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Gulf of Sidra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Operation Early Call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Operation Arid Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Operation Intense Look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Operation El Dorado Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Operation Odyssey Dawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Operation Unified Protector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>Operation Odyssey Guard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.3 Modern U.S.-Libyan Diplomacy: A Dismal Record

Robert Bruce St. John described diplomacy between the United States and Libya succinctly. “Bilateral relations between Libya and the United States have been active, engaged, and positive for no more than twenty out of the last two hundred years, a dismal record with few parallels in the annals of American diplomatic history.”\textsuperscript{294}


\textsuperscript{293} Labott, “U.S. Mulling Military Options in Libya”; Evans et al., “Operation Odyssey Dawn.”
\textsuperscript{294} St. John, \textit{Libya and the United States}, 1.
Table 3.2 U.S.-Libyan Relations 1800-1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Pasha of Tripoli declares war on US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate closes at beginning of Tripolitan War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>US Senate approves treaty ending Barbary Wars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate re-opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>July 22</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate closes by order of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Jun 10</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate re-opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Aug 15</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate closes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US promotes its diplomatic presence from Consulate to Legation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Jun 6</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate re-opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Jul 1</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US consulate elevated to Consulate General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Dec 21</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Agreement to let US operate Wheelus AFB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Dec 24</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Libya declares independence; US Consulate General elevated to Legation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Secretary of State Dulles visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Enters into 16 year treaty with US allowing military bases in return for aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Libya opens legation in US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Jun 22</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Libya’s first diplomatic officer to US credentialed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td></td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Full diplomatic relations with Soviet Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US legation raised to embassy status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Libya’s first ambassador to US credentialed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Dec 14</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Libya joins United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Vice President Nixon visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>New US ambassador credentialed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>New Libyan ambassador credentialed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US withdraws ambassador</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Libya withdraws ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US embassy building attacked and burned</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Diplomatic relations between Libya and the United States worsened after 1980.

(See Table 3.3) Although protestors first attacked the U.S. embassy in Tripoli in 1967,
the facility remained relatively secure until December 1979 when a mob destroyed it. 295

The U.S. closed embassy operations on May 2, 1980, and the Libyan embassy in the United States closed four days later. A United States Interests section established in June 2004 led to full diplomatic relations in 2006. 296 The embassy operated out of the Corinthia Bab Africa Hotel (“where the host government’s scrutiny was heavy-handed” 297) until May 2008, when it moved to a leased compound. 298 The U.S. suspended operations in Tripoli on February 25, 2011, due to the violent suppression of protests by Gaddafi but resumed operations by September 22, 2011. The September 2012 attacks and never re-opened. 299 The U.S. evacuated its embassy compound in a convoy protected by Marines on July 26, 2014, and set up in Valletta, Malta. 300 The State Department never returned. The U.S. Legation Libya currently operates out of the U.S. embassy building in Tunis. 301


298 U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, 7, 23.


301 U.S. Embassy in Libya, “History of the U.S. and Libya.”
U.S. relations with Gaddafi have been “characterized at the outset by political tension and mutual mistrust that later deteriorated into open hostility.” It did not help relations that “throughout the Reagan years the USA devised various ploys to rid Libya of its leader.” The diplomatic climate warmed a bit, allowing low level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US closes embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US bombing raid on Gaddafi’s home and headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>US expels Libyan diplomats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>US orders American citizens to leave Libya; US passports not valid for travel to Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US opens Interests Section in Belgian Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Jun 28</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US elevates Interests Section to U.S. Liaison Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Jul 8</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Libya opens Interests Section in Embassy of United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Jun 5</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>US expels Libyan attache to its UN delegation for participating in attacks on Libyan exiles in US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Liaison Office elevated to embassy status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Sep 5</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Secretary of State Rice visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>U.S. embassy operations suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Stevens appointed as representative to TNC in Benghazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Benghazi</td>
<td>US diplomatic presence moved to Benghazi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Jul 15</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>US recognizes TNC as legitimate government of Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Sep 22</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US Embassy re-opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>Secretary of State Clinton visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>Benghazi</td>
<td>Temporary diplomatic facility attacked; ambassador killed; diplomatic presence closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>Tripoli</td>
<td>US suspends embassy operations; mission relocated to Valletta, Malta and later Tunis, Tunisia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 U.S.-Libya Relations 1980-2014

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diplomatic activity with Tripoli during the Clinton administration. Libya later supplied terror suspect names to the CIA after the September 11 attacks in New York due to these contacts.304

After Libya abandoned its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction in 2004, the CIA began to partner with Libyan intelligence on secret programs. Hundreds of letters and other documents recovered from the former intelligence ministry show that Libyan agents carried out torture as part of the CIA’s extraordinary rendition program.305 The rendition program brought captives to foreign countries for interrogation, often involving torture.306 Cooperation between the intelligence services of the United States and Libya faded as relations between Gaddafi and the U.S. deteriorated. Benghazi beat three police officers to death during a protest demonstration. The CIA reported in The President’s Daily Brief on January 14, 1976, “Libyan students have become increasingly resentful of Gaddafi’s dictatorial rule and his constant interference in their curricula. The incident in Benghazi is one of several indications of intensified tribal and regional frictions.”307 Eventually, widespread dissension would bring down Gaddafi’s government when the military balked at further violent suppression of demonstrators.

Gaddafi’s hold on his government weakened over time in the wake of mass demonstrations. As an example, on January 4, 1976, students at the University of Benghazi increasingly resentful of Gaddafi’s dictatorial rule and his constant interference in their curricula. The incident in Benghazi is one of several indications of

304 Anderson, “Review of Libya and the United States: Two Centuries of Strife by Ronald Bruce.”
306 Bell, “CIA, MI6 Helped Gaddafi on Dissidents: Rights Group.”
intensified tribal and regional frictions.” Eventually, widespread dissension would bring down Gaddafi’s government when the military balked at further violent suppression of demonstrators.

### 3.2.4 The 2011 Civil War in Libya

Arab world protests began in Tunisia in December 2010. Libyans joined the protest in January 2011 to complain of incompetence, corruption, human rights abuses, and poor housing. Beginning February 15, 2011, the demonstrations against Gaddafi turned into widespread disruptions that prompted a harsh government response, which further undermined support for Gaddafi in the military. By February 18, significant demonstrations broke out in Benghazi, Baida, Azdabiya, Zawiya, and Derna. Human Rights Watch counted 84 people killed over three days. Atrocities, such as shooting at a funeral procession in Benghazi on February 19, reinforced dissension in the military. The Congressional Research Service reported, “Many military officers and conscripts have refused to follow orders to fire upon other Libyans, and some have joined the insurrections.” Libya degenerated into a government characterized by regional clans’ tribal differences without effective military suppression of protests.

The insurrection centered on Benghazi in the eastern part of the country. Gaddafi had previously disfavored the eastern part of Libya, rendering it relatively undeveloped.

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308 U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.
313 Blanchard and Zanotti, 3.
and marginalized in ways that led to widespread discontent. Historically, Benghazi had been the focus of opposition to governments in Tripoli and became the cradle of opposition to Gaddafi. The coup in which Gaddafi seized power took place in Benghazi, where the dictator had predicted that opposition to his regime would begin there. Student demonstrations, identified as a growing threat to the regime by the CIA as early as 1976, occurred in Benghazi.

The United Nations, after sanctioning Gaddafi and suspending Libya from membership on its Human Rights Council, imposed a no-fly zone over Libya on March 17, 2011. France, Great Britain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Norway, Qatar, Spain, and UAE, and United States contributed military assets, with U.S. air forces attacking Libyan government units headed to Benghazi. The air assault checked the Libyan army within 100 miles of Benghazi, which Gaddafi had threatened by radio, “We are coming tonight. There won’t be any mercy.”

Having strengthened rebel forces fighting regime loyalists, “the NATO mission steadily transgressed its original remit to protect Libyan civilians and began to target

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320 Pavia, “US Forces Poised to Lead Allied Attack on Gaddafi”; Hounshell, “Should the U.S. Arm the Libyan Rebels?” A growing body of scholarship, however, argues that non-government organizations exaggerated Gaddafi forces use of violence and ignored protestor violence in order to induce international intervention. See, for example, Riley, “Deceived to Intervene.”
Gaddafi himself.” Nevertheless, when President Obama notified the House and Senate on March 21, 2011, that airstrikes in Libya had been underway since March 19, he claimed that “the United States has not deployed ground forces into Libya” other than units “conducting a limited and well-defined mission in support of international efforts to protect civilians and prevent humanitarian disaster.” The letter, required by the War Powers Resolution, neither identified the mission nor the nature of Special Forces and CIA units operating in Libya. The White House distinguished between the use of the CIA and the deployment of the military. When President Obama authorized the use of armed Predator drones against the Libyan army in April, the administration acknowledged that the military advisers of Britain, France, and Italy “represented boots on the ground ... ‘But they’re not American boots.’”

After formal recognition of the Transitional National Council (TNC) as the government of Libya in July 2011, U.S. diplomats abandoned the Tripoli embassy. In February 2011 they returned to Libya, establishing a presence in Benghazi. Later, the embassy in Tripoli re-opened with Chris Stevens as ambassador.

The rebels, now with NATO air cover, completed the capture of Tripoli by August 26, although Gaddafi managed to escape the city in an armored convoy. Rebel forces killed Gaddafi outside of Sirte on October 20, 2011. (“We came, we saw, he died,”

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322 The White House, “Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.”
325 Associated Press, “Heavy Clashes as Libyan Rebels Enter Zawiya”; Fahim and Mazzetti, “Rebels’ Assault on Tripoli Began With Careful Work Inside.”
purred Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.)\textsuperscript{327} The end of the regime did not end the conflict. Gråtrud and Skretting explained, “The overthrow of Muammar al-Gaddafi in 2011 created a security vacuum in Libya, which made it possible for local militias to carve out fiefdoms largely beyond the control of the country’s interim government in Tripoli.”\textsuperscript{328} As always with Libyan politics, regional and tribal differences militated against unification efforts.

The TNC, established as an interim organization, organized elections to elect a General National Council. The election held on July 7, 2012, selected an assembly that took power on August 8.\textsuperscript{329} According to the Associated Press, “The ceremony marked the first peaceful power transfer in Libya’s modern history.\textsuperscript{330} Although the transfer was peaceful, it did not bring about national unity.

The TNC, which had been unable to unify foes opposed to Gaddafi into a consolidated fighting force, faced criticism that the new government did not reflect the Libyan people. “Instead, the militias and rival tribes often clash from their power bases in different parts of the country. Also, eastern Libya complained [it was] still under-represented in the new government, as it [had been] under Gaddafi, and there [was] talk of setting up a semi-autonomous government there.”\textsuperscript{331} The BBC reported that more than 1700 militia groups operated in Libya.\textsuperscript{332} Local militias refused to accept the GNC

\textsuperscript{327} Shane and Becker, “The Libya Gamble: A New Libya, With ‘Very Little Time Left.’”
\textsuperscript{328} Gråtrud and Skretting, “Ansa Al-Sharia in Libya: An Enduring Threat,” 40.
\textsuperscript{329} UK House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, “Libya: Examination of Intervention and Collapse and the UK’s Future Policy Options,” 6.
\textsuperscript{331} Associated Press, “Libya’s Transitional Rulers Hand Over Power to Elected Assembly.”
\textsuperscript{332} Campbell, “Failure Begets Failure: The NATO Quagmire Consumes the U.S. Ambassador to Libya,” 194, 201–2.
as having authority in areas the militias controlled. The New York Times reported, “It was increasingly evident that the ragtag populist army that had actually done the fighting against Colonel Gaddafi was not taking orders from the men in suits who believed they were Libya’s new leaders.” As a result, tribal and religious factions fighting for control throughout the country created a dangerous environment in the nation, especially in Benghazi.

4 BENGHAZI: SEPTEMBER 2012

Eastern Libya had always been at odds with governments operating from Tripoli. Resentment towards the new national assembly spurred numerous factions into hostile relations with each other. “[T]he government has struggled to impose its authority on a myriad of armed groups who refuse to lay down their weapons.” The 2011 revolution created a power vacuum that attracted multiple radical organizations. “Within this vacuum, some armed groups with radical Islamist orientation, transnational linkages and aspirations, and external support established a strong presence, limited popular support notwithstanding.” The groups now possessed heavy weapons looted from Gaddafi’s armories. Table 4.1 lists significant groups operating in the country in 2012.

335 Gumuchian and Shuaib, “Libya’s Ruling Council Hands Over Power to New Assembly.”
The GNC not only failed to control militias, but the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs later issued a finding that “Prior to the terrorist attacks in Libya on September 11, 2012, it was widely understood that the Libyan government was incapable of performing its duty to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel, as required by longstanding international agreements....” The GNC possessed limited power to check ongoing violence because its security forces did not have weapons as potent as those the militias brandished.

The peaceful installation of a national assembly did not mean that the country was at peace. Violence marred the transfer of power. A car bomb detonated near a police station in Tripoli. A bomb exploded at the abandoned Gaddafi military intelligence

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Table 4.1 Major Terrorist Groups in Libya 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ansar al-Sharia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Libyan Islamic Fighting Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libyan Muslim Brotherhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libyan Shield Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misratan Union of Revolutionaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Qaaada Brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Sawaiq Brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 17 February Martyrs Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Zintan Military Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>al-Zintan Revolutionaries’ Council</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

office in Benghazi. The International Committee of the Red Cross closed offices in Benghazi and Misrata after two RPG rounds hit on May 22, 2012. Overall, the State Department’s Regional Security Officer in Libya, Eric Nordstrom, identified 234 security incidents in Libya between June 2011 and July 2012. Fifty of the attacks were in Benghazi. In response to the violence, Western diplomatic missions and the mission from Iran left Benghazi. Amidst all the violence, the United States opened two compounds in Benghazi: the Temporary Mission Facility (often mischaracterized as an embassy or consulate) and a CIA fortress later given the cover name “The Annex.”

### 4.1 The Mission of the CIA in Benghazi

The Benghazi outpost existed as one of several CIA intelligence hubs in Libya. A military expert with excellent sources, Paula Broadwell, characterized it as the largest outpost in North Africa. (See Figure 4.1) The CIA compound pre-dated the establishment of the Temporary Mission Facility by several months. Records show that the CIA operated the compound at least by February 2011 and “long before the UN resolution and possibly even before the first days of the Benghazi uprising.”

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341 Kross, *Tales from Langley*, 365.
Chris Stevens, then the U.S. Special Representative to the National Transitional Council, moved into the CIA compound when the initial locus of the diplomatic facility, a hotel, could not be made secure. Stevens later leased several neighboring villas that became the diplomatic compound.

An unclassified explanation for a CIA presence in Benghazi other than generalized mission narratives never materialized. Officially, the CIA presence in Benghazi functioned as a “key outpost used by the United States to understand developments during the revolution and to influence key players in eastern Libya after Gaddafi. [The] CIA had established a presence in Benghazi with the mission of collecting intelligence....” CIA Director David Petraeus, Deputy Director Michael Morell, “The Real Story of Benghazi: A CIA Insider’s Account of What Happened on 9/11/12.”
Morell, and other witnesses all claimed that intelligence gathering constituted the station's primary purpose. Morrell, however, admitted that he was unaware of an operating directive – a mandate “that goes to stations and bases that says, here’s your job” – for the facility in Benghazi. CIA intelligence allegedly supported efforts to recover vast amounts of weapons looted from Gaddafi’s armories that armed militia groups, and perhaps others. “Tanks, machine guns, mortars, small arms, explosives, rocket-propelled grenades (RPG), anti-aircraft guns and man-portable (MANPAD) surface-to-air missiles, which reportedly numbered upwards of 20,000 in Gaddafi’s arsenal, were just a few of the thousands of weapons under reclamation by authorities.” Weeks before he died, Glen Doherty, a contract combatant for the CIA out of Tripoli, told ABC News that “he was working in Libya to round up dangerous heavy weapons that had been looted during the nation’s 2011 revolution.”

The CIA devised a significant operation to interdict the circulation of high-quality weapons suddenly available to terrorist groups, such as the Algerian-based Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), from looted Libyan army arsenals abandoned as the Gaddafi regime collapsed. Military equipment poured out of the country by land across the coast and the southern border and by sea, principally through Benghazi. The CIA sought to interdict the weapons transfer.

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351 Judy, “Benghazi: Deception, Denial and Fatal Diplomacy,” 83; Chivers, “Antiaircraft Missiles on the Loose in Libya.”
352 Ferran, “CIA to Pay Benghazi Contractor Glen Doherty’s Family $400K.”
The Benghazi CIA compound was heavily protected. The intelligence agency’s secret worldwide security force, the CIA Global Response Staff, included a unit in Benghazi. The Americans killed in the September 12 mortar attack, Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods, had joined GRS along with “hundreds of former U.S. Special Forces operatives [recruited] to serve as armed guards for the agency’s spies.” The CIA benefited from employing highly skilled and experienced contractors that the agency did not have to train before incorporating into CIA operations.

Unlike CIA employees in the field, GRS operatives did not undertake intelligence operations. The Global Response Staff mission was “to stay in the shadows, training teams to work undercover and provide an unobtrusive layer of security for CIA officers in high-risk outposts.” Officers could concentrate on business without worrying about security. Working for GRS exposed contractors to exceptional levels of peril. Of the fourteen CIA employees who died between 2009 and the attack in Benghazi, five (36%) were GRS contractors. CIA contractors in Benghazi regularly comprised security teams assigned to State Department envoys, including Chris Stevens. For example, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence report states, “Ambassador Stevens arrived in Benghazi on September 10 “to be present at a September 11 ceremony establishing a new American Corner at a local Benghazi school with the Turkish chief of mission in Benghazi. He had other meetings planned that week, during which the CIA was to provide security.”

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354 Miller and Tate, “CIA’s Global Response Staff Emerging from Shadows After Incidents in Libya and Pakistan.”
355 Miller and Tate.
356 Miller and Tate. Miller and Tate.
Whatever the Central Intelligence Agency sought to do in Benghazi remains secret. The intense secrecy meant that General Carter Ham, the AFRICOM commander responsible for all U.S. military operations in Africa, “was not aware of the Annex until the night of September 11th-12th, 2012.” Even after the September 11th attacks, an effort to obscure the existence of the CIA facility persisted until State Department officials accidentally acknowledged its presence in Congressional hearings, which investigative media sources subsequently corroborated. The perceived need to keep CIA involvement in the Benghazi attacks resulted in unusual anomalies in Congressional oversight investigations. The report issued on December 30 by the Senate Committee Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, for example, mentions the CIA five times. None of the references even hint at the existence of a CIA facility in Benghazi; instead, each addresses agency participation in the United States after the attacks. The label “Annex” appears 17 times in the report, described as a facility “approximately a mile away used by another agency of the United States Government.”

Charlene Lamb, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs in the State Department, disclosed the existence of a CIA compound, possibly accidentally, during testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform on October 10, 2012. As Ms. Lamb described the evacuation of personnel from the Temporary Mission Facility, Rep. Chaffetz interrupted her when she mentioned the Annex.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that we are getting into classified issues that deal with sources

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360 Kelley and Ingersoll, “It’s Time to Discuss the Secret CIA Operation at the Heart of the US Mission In Benghazi.”
and methods that would be totally inappropriate in an open forum such as this.

He further opposed public display of a photograph depicting the Annex

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Chairman, I totally object to the use of that photo.

Chairman ISSA. The gentleman will state his reason.

Mr. CHAFFETZ. I believe it to be classified information that goes to sources and methods and should not be disseminated in a public manner such as State is doing here today.

And a moment later,

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Can I make one more comment? I was told specifically while I was in Libya I could not and should not ever talk about what you are showing here today.\footnote{U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, “U.S. Congress, House, Oversight and Gov’t Reform, Benghazi Security Failures,” 32–33.}
House members visiting Benghazi received warnings cautioning against the disclosure of information concerning the CIA facility. The existence of the Annex became part of the public record anyway. Congressman Peter Kross chided Ms. Lamb for producing “a photograph of the secret compound, which she should never have done.”362 The Daily Beast reported, “State Department officials testifying referenced an aerial photograph of the Benghazi mission that disclosed the CIA annex more than a mile away.”363 Ms. Lamb’s testimony established the existence of a CIA compound, leaving questions about how the agency used it unanswered.

People living and working in Benghazi lacked knowledge of the facility until after the attacks caused Americans to evacuate the compound. Nancy Youssef, writing for the McClatchy papers, went to Benghazi two months after the attacks. “Top Libyan security officials in Benghazi and Tripoli, as well as diplomatic representatives who worked closely with Americans here, said they had no idea about the compound, which unlike the consulate had no signs of American life outside its tall gates.”364 Even the Libyan government did not know of the CIA presence because agents carried diplomatic passports. Mustafa Abushagour, the deputy prime minister in the new government, learned that the CIA operated in Benghazi because after the attacks “a surprisingly large number of Americans showed up at the Benghazi airport to be evacuated.”365

Initial informational disclosures following the deaths of Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty identified the two as State Department contractors, although they worked for

362 Kross, Tales from Langley, 370.
363 Lake, “Exclusive: CIA Honored Benghazi Chief in Secret Ceremony.”
364 Youssef, “Libyans, Diplomats: CIA’s Benghazi Station a Secret – and Quickly Repaired.”
365 Hancock and Wexler, Shadow Warfare, 542; Schmitt, “C.I.A. Played Major Role Fighting Militants in Libya Attack.”
the CIA. On September 14, 2012, President Obama, Vice President Biden, Secretary Clinton, Defense Secretary Panetta, UN Ambassador Rice, and former Secretary of State Powell attended the arrival of their bodies and the bodies of Ambassador Stevens and Sean Smith at Joint Base Andrews; CIA Director Petraeus did not. Petraeus later explained that he did not appear at Joint Base Andrews when the remains came home, citing a need to preserve the secret about the CIA base in Benghazi.

The extreme secrecy surrounding the CIA facility constitutes a reason for government officials to act deceptively. Secrecy prevented public examination of events leading up to the September 11 attacks and inhibited image availability related to the attack. Congressional investigations after the American deaths in Benghazi produced both public and classified reports. The State Department Accountability Review Board produced two reports. The Joint Senate and House Intelligence Committee published only four unclassified sections of its report, with the remainder retained in a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence report omits classified information, mainly about CIA activities. The House Select Committee report contains numerous deletions and indications that they

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370 U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee on Intelligence and House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, “Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001.”
did not include classified material in the record available to the public.\textsuperscript{372} Withholding almost all direct evidence for security reasons forces the use of circumstantial evidence in the following narrative. Nevertheless, “A concurrence of well-authenticated circumstances composes a stronger ground of assurance, than positive testimony, unconfirmed by circumstances, usually affords. Circumstances cannot lie.”\textsuperscript{373} Researchers routinely employ circumstantial evidence to interrogate a variety of issues.\textsuperscript{374} No epistemological difference exists between the validity of direct and circumstantial arguments.\textsuperscript{375} Intrinsically they are not different.\textsuperscript{376}

4.2 The Department of State in Benghazi

The Department of State routinely provides the CIA with cover throughout the world. “Most CIA case officers worked under official cover, meaning that they pretended to be working for another branch of the U.S. government, typically the State Department.”\textsuperscript{377} The State Department mission in Benghazi concealed CIA covert operations already underway in Eastern Libya. “The consulate provided diplomatic cover for the classified CIA operations,” the Wall Street Journal reported,\textsuperscript{378} which was

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{372} U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, “Final Report.”
\item \textsuperscript{373} Paley, “The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,” 551.
\item \textsuperscript{375} Heller, “The Cognitive Psychology of Circumstantial Evidence,” 243; Rosenberg and Rosenberg, “‘Perhaps What Ye Say Is Based Only on Conjecture’—Circumstantial Evidence, Then and Now,” 1422; Allen, “Naturalized Epistemology and the Law of Evidence Revisited,” fn. 68.
\item \textsuperscript{376} Holland v. United States, 348 U.S. 121, 140 (1954).
\item \textsuperscript{377} Naylor, “The CIA at 70: How Going Undercover Has Gotten Harder”; Miller, “CIA’s Secret Agents Hide Under a Variety of Covers”; Herman, “Diplomacy and Intelligence,” 15–16; Marchetti and Marks, \textit{The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence}, 34, 216, 225; Stempel, “Covert Action and Diplomacy,” 124; Shackley and Finney, \textit{Spymaster}, 285.
\end{itemize}
not an unusual arrangement. “The State Department allows hundreds of its positions in embassies around the world to be occupied by CIA officers representing themselves as diplomats.”379 Seymour Hersh quoted a former intelligence official disclosing that the TMF existed only to provide cover for the CIA. “It had no real political role.”380 A Diplomatic Security Agent at the TMF testified before Congress, “We weren’t processing visas, we weren’t doing any of the regular duties. We weren’t set up to help American citizen services in the way that a regular consulate is set up.”381 The Libyan government never granted diplomatic status to the TMF.382

When the State Department established a physical presence in Benghazi, it encompassed a pre-existing CIA compound.383 “The CIA worked from a compound publicly referred to as the “Annex,” which was given a State Department office name to disguise its purpose.”384 Figure 4.1 depicts the Annex. Minimal staffing at the diplomatic mission underscored its makeshift nature. In contrast to the thriving Annex, Gen. David Petraeus said, “I mean the TMF was basically a compound. It was unoccupied. I think at most it had two Americans in it normally other than a handful of guards.”385 Figure 4.2 maps the TMF. The local guards had been told that the TMF “was a political mission, not a full-fledged embassy.”386 More than 30 Americans evacuated

379 Miller, “CIA’s Secret Agents Hide Under a Variety of Covers.”
380 Hersh, “The Red Line and the Rat Line: Seymour M. Hersh on Obama, Erdoğan and the Syrian Rebels.”
382 Morell, The Great War of Our Time: The CIA’s Fight Against Terrorism--From al Qa’ida to ISIS, 199.
384 Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya”; Kelley and Ingersoll, “It’s Time to Discuss the Secret CIA Operation at the Heart of the US Mission In Benghazi.”
from both Benghazi compounds after the September 11 attacks. Only seven worked for the State Department.  

Secretary Clinton dispatched J. Christopher Stevens to act as a special representative of the United States to the rebel Libyan Islamic Fighting Group that operated from Benghazi. The British and French also appointed special

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representatives to work with rebels. The State Department’s desire to open a facility in Benghazi lacked purpose. The House Select Committee, in its final report, concluded, “The Benghazi Mission existed in a state of diplomatic uncertainty – never having a clearly defined status....” The Committee complained that on the question of why the State Department insisted on a presence in Benghazi, “many questions remain and much classified information was withheld from the Committee.”

Unclassified email buried in the files of the House Select Committee provides a clue to the reasoning behind opening a mission in Benghazi. The email records a Diplomatic Security agent complaining to another agent about the Principal Officer at the mission trying to perform typical duties of a diplomatic office.

Unfortunately, nobody has advised the PO that Benghazi is there to support operations, not conduct substantive reporting.

Apparently because of the lack of diplomatic work at the facility, Stevens’ initial authorization to operate in Benghazi lasted 30 days. The date for closing the facility pushed back to the end of the summer and extended again to December 2012. No substantive explanation for the extensions exists in unclassified materials other than a

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memo that “noted its importance to eastern Libyans and the assistance it could provide to the embassy in Tripoli.” Stevens asked to end the mission around October 6, 2011; instead, it was extended.

Once he received the appointment to the special diplomatic post, Stevens traveled from Malta to Benghazi on the Aegean Pearl, a Greek cargo vessel, arriving in Benghazi on April 5, 2011. He initially operated out of the Tibesti Hotel in Benghazi but moved to the CIA facility on June 21, 2011. Stevens leased the Temporary Mission compound on August 3, 2011. When Stevens left Libya on November 17, 2011, a Deputy Chief of Mission replaced him in Benghazi. He then returned to Libya on May 26, 2012, this time as the Ambassador in Tripoli.

Ambiguity concerning the need for a diplomatic presence in Benghazi contributed to the lack of security. The State Department’s Accountability Review Board report on the Benghazi attacks admitted that the TMF’s “uncertain future after 2012 and its ‘non-status’ as a temporary, residential facility” disrupted usual allocations of security resources.

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mitigated against enhancing security. “I believe the mission was tentatively scheduled to 
close in December. And, therefore, the State Department was loathe to spend more 
money to do serious upgrades on the existing compound or spend more – even more 
money building a new compound from scratch.” The Wall Street Journal reported 
that the State Department relied on the CIA to provide security for the diplomatic 
mission. “State Department officials believed that responsibility was set to be 
shouldered in part by CIA personnel in the city through a series of secret agreements 
that even some officials in Washington didn’t know about.”

Ambassador Stevens wrote in his diary that he rejected the traditional Marine 
contingent assigned to protect diplomatic facilities because he did not want to militarize 
the compound. In addition, Stevens did not accept the offer by AFRICOM to extend 
the deployment of a six member Site Security Team. The State Department, for its 
part, contracted an English company known as Blue Mountain Group on May 3, 2011, to 
supply guards. In turn, Blue Mountain hired unarmed Libyans as guards at $4 per hour 
while members of the February 17 Martyrs’ Brigade served as armed guards. The

403 U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, 
“Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 3 (Interview of Diplomatic Security Officer #4),” 623.
404 Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya.”
405 Campbell, “Failure Begets Failure: The NATO Quagmire Consumes the U.S. Ambassador to Libya,” 212.
406 U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, 
“Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 10 (Interview of Carter Ham),” 1261–62; U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on 
the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 10 (Interview of James Northey Miller, Jr.),” 1052–53; U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on 
Armed Services, “AFRICOM and SOCAFRICA and the Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi: Hearing before the 
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (Testimony 
Attack Called Avoidable in Senate Report.”
407 Ackerman and Schachtman, “Feds Hired British Security Firm to Protect Benghazi Consulate”; GlobalSecurity.org, 
“Operation Jukebox Lotus”; Office of Acquisition Management, “Solicitation, Offer, and Award”; Schachtman and 
Beckhusen, “State Department: We Monitored Libya Attack ‘in Almost Real Time.’”
unarmed Libyans patrolled the perimeter of the compound to control access and raise the alarm in the event of an incident.408

Although CIA Deputy Director Morell and Director Petraeus publicly denied that the CIA provided security to the State Department after the attack,409 “there was a clear lack of understanding about mutual security responsibilities and communication between the State Department and the CIA.”410 A Congressional investigator told the *Washington Post* that "the secret CIA-State security arrangement was inadequate."411 The CIA, for example, had responsibility for “vetting the Libyan militia” assigned to protect the diplomatic compound.412 Secretary Clinton called CIA Director Petraeus during the attack on the TMF to discuss the security situation. Gen. Petraeus testified that the Secretary wanted assurances that the CIA was doing everything possible.413

Secretary Clinton faced a dilemma. During the subsequent investigations, she could not state that the CIA was to provide security at the TMF because the presence of the CIA in Benghazi remained secret and because the State Department needed to “persist with the fiction that Benghazi was just a normal diplomatic facility.”414 From the start, the secret relationship between the CIA and Christopher Stevens’ diplomatic mission to Benghazi required that the State Department, at least in public, accept responsibility for subsequent events.

412 Lake, “In Benghazi, CIA Trusted Local Militia That Melted Away.”
4.3 Arms Into Libya, Arms Out of Libya

U.S. involvement in weapons transactions originating in Libya functioned as a key motive for stringent secrecy regarding CIA/State Department activities in Benghazi. No one disputes that Libya became a major locus for worldwide arms trading, with Libyan weapons eventually showing up in Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and Gaza. The government of Libya could not control borders, ports, and airports, allowing militia groups to arm rebels throughout northern Africa.

At the beginning of Libya’s civil war in the post-Gaddafi period, U.S. officials advocated arming rebels but felt domestic and international legal restrictions prohibited such actions. As the regime began to crumble, militia groups operating inside the country looted Libyan military weapons, flooding the market and exporting the spoils to insurgents outside the country. In March of 2011, President Obama signed a secret presidential finding authorizing the CIA to operate in Libya although the agency allegedly had been operating in the country “long before the passage of the United Nations resolution authorizing the use of force to protect civilians.” Under the presidential directive, the CIA started training 30,000 Libyan men for combat. After disclosing the finding, the administration would not comment on intelligence matters other than, “[N]o decision has been made about providing arms to rebels.”

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415 Shane and Becker, “The Libya Gamble: A New Libya, With ‘Very Little Time Left.’”
417 Judy, “Benghazi: Deception, Denial and Fatal Diplomacy,” 34.
419 The Times, “CIA Agents Are Helping Libya Rebels, White House Confirms.”
reports claimed that the CIA – along with British Special Forces and MI6 operatives – “inserted small groups of clandestine operatives to gather intelligence for air strikes as part of a shadow force of Westerners that the United States hopes [could] help bleed Gaddafi’s military.”

The CIA and the State Department attempted to track down weapons the rebels had acquired by plundering Gaddafi’s armories. The United States, for example, set up a classified $40 million program in 2011 to acquire old Soviet-era antiaircraft missiles from rebels. Gaddafi acquired about 200,000 missiles, mostly SA-7s (a man-portable weapon (MANPAD) equivalent to the US-manufactured Stinger missile). Despite the existence of these programs, Libyan weapons found their way to Syria. The nature and extent of U.S. participation remain unconfirmed but inferred.

4.3.1 Weapons Into Libya

Secretary of State Clinton, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Petraeus, Secretary of Defense Panetta, Chairman of the Joints of Staff Dempsey, and even Sen. John McCain advocated providing weapons to rebels. Figuring out how to do so legally became a significant challenge. The War Powers Act circumscribes the power of a U.S. president to introduce U.S. armed forces into a conflict. It requires the president to notify Congress in writing of military participation in potentially hostile situations.

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421 Hosenball.
“Under the War Powers Resolution, a president can initiate military action but must receive approval from Congress to continue the operation within sixty days.”  

Historically, presidents have circumscribed the Act by using technical interpretations. Since the Act specifies “United States Armed Forces,” various executive branches have concluded that it does not apply to CIA activities, actions taken by other countries at the instigation of the United States, or the work of private contractors the United States employs.

A written “Presidential Finding” constitutes a more potent restraint. A finding must precede any covert action by a United States government agency or any third party acting on its behalf. A finding may not justify any action “which has already occurred.” The Executive Branch must disclose the finding to Congressional intelligence committees or, if it is highly secret, to the chair and ranking member of intelligence committees and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House and Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate.

International law constitutes the third hurdle. The United Nations imposed an embargo on arms shipments to Libya on February 26, 2011. Security Council Resolution 1970, among other sanctions, banned the direct or indirect transfer of weapons to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the country’s official name as recognized by the United Nations. The resolution banned the import of weapons into the country (not just to the Gaddafi regime), which created a problem for countries desiring to arm the rebels. “Sending in weapons would have arguably violated an arms embargo on Libya the U.N.

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427 Campbell, “NATO in Libya as a Military Information Operation,” 150.
Security Council imposed on February 26, although British, U.S., and French officials have suggested there [might have been] a loophole,” Reuters reported. While U.S. Secretary of State Clinton argued that arming the rebels was legal, the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, “admitted that arming rebels would breach the terms of the UN arms embargo.” In this context, the United States abided by the specific terms of the embargo while allegedly exploring other conduits into Libya. Despite the restrictions, President Obama admitted, “It’s fair to say that if we wanted to get weapons into Libya, we probably could.”

Arms did indeed pour into Libya. In March 2011, President Obama approved a covert operation that initiated flows of weapons to anti-Gaddafi rebels, although U.S. intelligence operatives had already been working in the country. Countries friendly to the United States, mainly Qatar, provided the weapons. “Throughout the spring, the administration had effectively turned a blind eye as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates supplied the rebels with lethal assistance, according to Mr. Gates and others.” The problem with funneling armaments through Qatar was that they often ended up with terrorists. The New York Times revealed, “The Obama administration secretly gave its blessing to arms shipments to Libyan rebels from Qatar last year, but American officials later grew alarmed as evidence grew that Qatar was turning some of the weapons over to

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430 Hosenball, “U.S. Activist Says He Was Deceived over Anti-Muslim Film”; Hounshell, “Should the U.S. Arm the Libyan Rebels?”
431 Naughton, Gray, and Hines, “Clinton Says Arming Rebels Is Legal”; Spencer, “France Supplying Weapons to Libyan Rebels.”
433 Hosenball, “U.S. Agents Were in Libya before Secret Obama Order.”
435 Shane and Becker, “The Libya Gamble: Hillary Clinton, ‘Smart Power’ and a Dictator’s Fall.”
Islamic militants, according to United States officials and foreign diplomats.” Using third parties to arm rebels created additional problems.

The United Arab Emirates requested permission to send the Libyan rebels American-made weapons that the United States had provided to the UAE for its own use. “The administration rejected that request, but instead urged the emirates to ship weapons to Libya that could not be traced to the United States.” “Deniable weapons [were] the stock in trade of CIA covert operations.” The Qatari exclusively shipped French and Russian manufactured weapons to the rebels.

The U.S. may have also engaged private companies in the Libyan arms trade. Secretary Clinton sent an email to Jake Sullivan, her aide, on April 8, 2011, that said, “f.y.i. The idea of using private security experts to arm the opposition should be considered.” The United States had previously authorized a private security contractor, Mark Turi, to supply weapons worth $14 million to the Afghanistan intelligence agency in 2010. In February 2011, Turi arranged a $534 million program to transfer weapons from Eastern Europe to Libyan rebels but could not get an export license. A concurrent $114 million proposal by Osprey Global Solutions, championed by Clinton private email pen pal Sid Blumenthal, died when the National Security Council objected.

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436 Risen, Mazzetti, and Schmidt, “U.S.-Approved Arms for Libya Rebels Fell Into Jihadis’ Hands.”
437 Risen, Mazzetti, and Schmidt.
439 Risen, Mazzetti, and Schmidt, “U.S.-Approved Arms for Libya Rebels Fell Into Jihadis’ Hands.”
440 Wagner, “Marc Turi: The Mysterious Saga of an Arizona Arms Dealer.”
441 Wagner.
The Department of Justice indicted Turi on February 11, 2014, for arms trafficking. Turi’s defense “claimed Turi was a CIA contractor, working with agents, and the U.S. ‘did in fact covertly arm the Libyan rebels using a plan remarkably similar to the one at issue here.’” The Department of Justice abruptly dismissed the case after spending millions of dollars to prosecute it when U.S. District Court Judge David Campbell rejected the claim that evidence of “efforts by the United States to arrange for arms brokers to arrange covert transfers of weapons to the NTC in Libya” did not merit state-secret protection and needed to be produced by the government. The dismissal avoided disclosure of documents evidencing operations to supply weapons.

By July 2011, the United States decided to supply arms to Libya openly. The decision forced the United States to select one of the rebel groups as the new government. “Prompted in part by the decision to arm the rebels, the State Department recognized the Transitional National Council as the legitimate governing authority for Libya. Secretary Clinton announced the decision on July 15 in Istanbul.” Keeping weapons from leaving Libya became the next problem.

4.3.2 Libyan Weapons to Syria

The Obama administration did not publicly allow weapons shipments to Syria until 2013. Secretary Panetta, Secretary Clinton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey, and Gen. Petraeus recommended providing weapons, training, and money to

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446 United States v. Turi, 2:14-cr-00191-DGC (D.C.AZ.), Joint Motion to Dismiss, Doc 438.
448 Shane and Becker, “The Libya Gamble: Hillary Clinton, ‘Smart Power’ and a Dictator’s Fall.” Shane and Becker.
449 Hancock and Wexler, Shadow Warfare, 545.
moderate rebels in Syria.\textsuperscript{450} Covert operations to supply Syrian rebels with arms may have begun before official change in policy authorized them.\textsuperscript{451} Reports identified weapons transported from Libya to Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and Gaza.\textsuperscript{452} The new Libyan government openly supported Syrian rebels by providing money and weapons.\textsuperscript{453} \textit{The Sunday Times} (London) documented the journey of 400 tons of weapons on a Libyan ship, the \textit{Lutfallah II}, and seven other ships from Benghazi through Alexandria, Egypt (where shipping manifests were altered) to Lebanon.\textsuperscript{454} Turkey also became an important staging ground for smuggling weapons.\textsuperscript{455}

The extent of CIA involvement in transferring weapons to Syria remains classified. Although the United States officially opposed the transfer of heavy weapons into Syria, numerous reports surfaced that the United States facilitated such transfers. “But there’s growing evidence that U.S. agents — particularly murdered ambassador Chris Stevens — were at least aware of heavy weapons moving from Libya to jihadist Syrian rebels,” according to Business Insider.\textsuperscript{456} President Obama admitted that Syria’s neighbors provided weapons to Syrian rebels, although he denied U.S. involvement.\textsuperscript{457} The \textit{New York Times}, using reporting on the ground in Syria, interviews with militia members, smugglers, rebels, analysts, and officials in several countries, as well as flight-
control data later traced “a complex and active multinational effort, financed largely by Qatar, to transport arms from Libya to Syria’s opposition fighters.”\(^{458}\) Seymour Hersh reported that the U.S. ran “a back channel highway into Syria . . . to funnel weapons and ammunition from Libya via southern Turkey and across the Syrian border to the opposition.”\(^{459}\) The CIA partnered with MI6, according to Hersh, to acquire and ship weapons using front companies in Libya that retired American soldiers managed. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar provided funding. President Obama did not need to inform Congress because MI6 involvement allowed classification of the project as a non-reportable liaison operation.\(^{460}\)

Questions about the role of the CIA Annex persisted. “For years, Republican Members of Congress and Presidential candidates have alleged that the CIA was involved in an illicit government program to transfer weapons from Libya to Syria,” according to the Minority Report to the House Select Committee Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi.\(^{461}\) Congressional investigative committees did not avail themselves of the opportunity to inquire into CIA activity in Benghazi. Although the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence reported that it “found no evidence that the CIA conducted unauthorized activities in Benghazi and no evidence that the IC shipped arms to Syria”\(^{462}\) based on an investigation in which “the Committee conducted twenty full Committee events; interviewed nine eyewitnesses present in Benghazi during

\(^{458}\) Chivers, Schmitt, and Mazzetti, “In Turnabout, Syria Rebels Get Libyan Weapons”; Hancock and Wexler, \emph{Shadow Warfare}, 546.

\(^{459}\) Hersh, “The Red Line and the Rat Line: Seymour M. Hersh on Obama, Erdoğan and the Syrian Rebels.”

\(^{460}\) Hersh.


the attacks; reviewed thousands of pages of intelligence reports, cables, assessments, and emails; and received responses to dozens of questions for the record.”

The record contains no evidence that the Committee contacted any of the witnesses uncovered by journalists who provided shipping dates, weapons types, transport vessels, smuggling routes, and other details of alleged weapons transfers. All interviews of CIA personnel remain classified and unavailable to the public. The House Select Committee on Benghazi interrogated fourteen unnamed CIA agents directly involved with operations in Benghazi, including the Deputy Chief of Base. The interview transcripts attached to the final report contain no text other than: “The Central Intelligence Agency declined the Committee’s request to declassify the interview transcript.”

Transcripts of interviews conducted of non-CIA personnel disclose that the Committee asked questions like “Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee’s bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?” The Committee also interviewed Director Petraeus, Deputy Director Morell, and both the Director and Team Chief in the CIA Office of Terrorism

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463 U.S. Congress, House, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, 3.
466 See, for example, the testimony of unnamed Defense Attaché, U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 11 (Interview of Sensor Operator 2),” 326.
Analysis. Testimony of the Terrorism Office officials remains classified.\textsuperscript{467} No one asked Petraeus or Morrell about specific allegations supporting claims of weapons transfers.\textsuperscript{468}

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report released to the public an annex to the report previously seen only by the eight ranking members of Congress detailed “January 15, 2014, did not discuss weapons to Syria. Hersh revealed that a “secret agreement reached in early 2012 between the Obama and Erdoğan administrations” to send weapons confiscated in Benghazi to Turkey for transport into Syria.\textsuperscript{469} According to \textit{the New York Times}, “A small number of C.I.A. officers are operating secretly in southern Turkey, helping allies decide which Syrian opposition fighters across the border will receive arms to fight the Syrian government, according to American officials and Arab intelligence officers.”\textsuperscript{470} Campbell agreed. “The CIA also set up a center on the border between Turkey and Syria to oversee the funneling of arms, materiel, money, and fighters into the Syrian civil war.... [T]he CIA established a large presence in Benghazi to create a rear base for its covert war in Syria.”\textsuperscript{471} The Obama administration refused to comment on the reports.

Every government official testifying in front of a Congressional committee denied any such activity. For example, Jeremy Bash, the Chief of Staff for DOD at the time of the attacks, responded “no” to the formulaic leading question asked of every witness,  

\textsuperscript{469} Hersh, “The Red Line and the Rat Line: Seymour M. Hersh on Obama, Erdoğan and the Syrian Rebels.”  
\textsuperscript{470} Schmitt, “C.I.A. Said to Aid in Steering Arms to Syrian Opposition.” See also, Hancock and Wexler, \textit{Shadow Warfare}, 544.  
\textsuperscript{471} Campbell, “Failure Begets Failure: The NATO Quagmire Consumes the U.S. Ambassador to Libya,” 216.
“Do you have any evidence to contradict the House Intelligence Committee’s bipartisan report finding that the CIA was not shipping arms from Libya to Syria?”472 Table 4.2 lists witnesses not named for security reasons that testified in response to the same exact question that they had no such evidence.

Table 4.2 Unnamed Witnesses Asserting No Knowledge of Arms Transfers before House Benghazi Select Committee

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Source: US Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, Interviews of Witnesses Vol. 1-11. Witnesses are listed in the order that they were interviewed. *DS Agent 10 went off the record for a discussion before answering.
Michael Morell, deputy director of the CIA at the time of the attacks, wrote that the CIA “did not play any role in moving weapons from Libya to the opposition in Syria and neither did any other CIA officer or facility in Libya.” General David Petraeus, the CIA director, similarly denied CIA involvement. No public evidence supports a claim of CIA involvement. The House Select Committee investigating Benghazi interviewed sixteen anonymous witnesses from the intelligence community (all but one from the CIA), but in each case, “The Central Intelligence Agency declined the Committee’s request to declassify the interview transcript.” The intelligence community witnesses whose testimony remains classified are listed in Table 4.3.

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<td>GRS Agent #2</td>
<td>May 27, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1013</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRS Agent #3</td>
<td>May 29, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>June 2, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>June 4, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Communications Officer</td>
<td>June 19, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1021</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRS - Tripoli</td>
<td>June 23, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1317</td>
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<td>Chief of Station</td>
<td>July 16, 2015</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1495</td>
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<td>November 13, 2015</td>
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<td>Team Chief, Office of Terrorism Analysis</td>
<td>February 16, 2016</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>GRS 4 (sic)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRS Agent #5</td>
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<td>(No date listed)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>897</td>
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Yet, questions remained. On August 1, 2013, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) asked on the House floor whether the CIA Annex served as a logistics center to transfer heavy weapons from Libyan arsenals to Syrian rebels. Wolf asked a pertinent question, "If these weapons were not being transferred to other countries like Syria, where exactly did they end up?" The size of the enormous CIA compound in Benghazi indicated that it was much more than an intelligence center. Even so, the House Permanent Select Committee investigating the Benghazi attacks concluded, “The Benghazi Annex was not itself collecting weapons. The Committee has not seen any credible information to dispute these facts.” No investigating committee, at least in public, inquired into the ultimate disposition of captured weapons.

4.4 The Attacks

The Benghazi attacks did not consist of a single long battle. According to CIA Deputy Director Morell, “In fact, there were three separate attacks that night, none of them showing evidence of significant planning, but each of them carried out by Islamic extremists, some with connections to al Qaeda, and each attack more potent than the one before.” CIA Director Petraeus added that the video evidenced a lack of planning by the aggressors. He faulted the attackers for neither having thought out how to

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477 Muñoz, “Report: CIA Using Polygraph Tests to Ensure Benghazi Operations Stay Secret.” Muñoz. None of the investigating committees ever asked the CIA to justify such a large compound. The question may have been raised in classified sessions that are still secret.
479 Morell, “The Real Story of Benghazi: A CIA Insider’s Account of What Happened on 9/11/12.”
break down the door to the ambassador’s sanctuary nor bringing sufficient weapons to the Annex assault. As Morell explained,

> When you assess the information from the video feed from the cameras at the TMF and the Annex, there are few signs of a well-thought-out plan, few signs of command and control, few signs of organization, few signs of coordination, few signs of even the most basic military tactics in the attack on the TMF. Some of the attackers were armed with small arms; many were not armed at all. No heavy weapons were seen on the videotape. Many of the attackers, after entering through the front gate, ran past buildings to the other end of the compound, behaving as if they were thrilled just to have overrun the compound.

The intelligence community concluded that Ansar al-Sharia waited for an opportunity to attack the TMF but did not plan a specific attack. The House Intelligence Committee reported, “On September 12, the DIA reported that there were no indications of preoperational planning, but that a mix of terrorist attackers ‘likely leveraged a target of opportunity amidst security vulnerabilities created by protest activity.’ Weeks afterwards, CIA and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) reported that ‘the attack probably was not specifically planned for 11 September.’”

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482 Morell, “The Real Story of Benghazi: A CIA Insider’s Account of What Happened on 9/11/12.”
Morrell testified that the CIA, the NCTC, and the Director of National Intelligence shared an assessment “that his was not a well-organized military assault; that these individuals ... were not all armed; ... [and] once they got into the compound they seemed more happy just to be on the compound than to be interested in hurting anybody.”

Under Secretary of State Patrick Kennedy felt that the breadth of attacks and the large quantities of small and medium weapons indicated advance planning for the attacks. The experts concluded that there may have been general planning, but nothing approaching the detail expected for a military operation.

**4.4.1 Attack on the Temporary Mission Facility**

Protestors completely overran the United States Embassy in Cairo on September 11, 2012, after YouTube showed clips of a video slandering Islam. Nikola Basseley Nakoula, using the pseudonym Sam Bacile, filmed the movie during May-August 2011 in California at the Media for Christ soundstage and at White Cloud Ranch. The film disappeared after its single showing at the Vine Studio on Hollywood Boulevard in June 2012. Nakoula used a pseudonym because of his notoriety for leading protests at

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The film's original title, Desert Warrior, changed to The Innocence of Bin Laden for the screening. (See Figure 4.3).

Brian Donnelly snapped the only known photo of the only known movie poster advertising the only known showing of the film. Translation:

Glad tidings to the Muslim and Arab community, with the occasion of holy Ramadan upon us we would like to announce the movie of the 21st century: "Innocence of Bin Laden".

For the first time in the history of international cinema, my Muslim brother you are about to witness the true terrorist [and] contains the evidence of his condemnation.

The terrorist who killed our children in Palestine and our brethren in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Source: Brian Donnelly. Used by permission.

Figure 4.3 Poster for the Film "Innocence of Muslims"

On September 9, the Al-Nas television channel in Egypt broadcast the 14-minute Arabic-language trailer initially posted on YouTube as The Innocence of Muslims and, later, Muhammed Movie Trailer, triggering the eruption in Egypt. Protests spread across the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Oceana.

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488 Ackerman, “What Happened in Benghzi Was a Battle.”
In Libya, Ansar-al-Sharia leaders posted “a speech on YouTube at 3 a.m. on September 11, 2012, denouncing the film, the American government, and call for attacks on American interests across Northern Africa.”491 The Defense Intelligence Agency issued a Terrorism Threat Warning to U.S. military forces to be alert for “violent reactions/response.”492 The events in Benghazi differed from the protest in Cairo. However, an analysis of 1.2 million tweets that Carnegie Mellon University researchers conducted found no evidence of attack or demonstration planning after the speech, in distinct contrast with what the same researchers found in Egypt.493 General Petraeus testified that the CIA believed the attack to be a spontaneous protest that extremists had hijacked. He claimed, but could not produce in an unclassified hearing, that 12 open source reports, signals intelligence, and other “intelligence products” informed the analysis.494 The House Intelligence Committee recounted that 21 sources – 14 from the Open Source Center, one from CIA, two from DOD, four from NSA - supported an assessment that a protest precipitated the attacks.495

492 U.S. Department of Defense, “Email from Elizabeth Train to Martin Dempsey and Others [Redacted], September 11, 2012.”
493 Boleng et al., “Fusing Open Source Intelligence and Handheld Situational Awareness.”
On September 11 at 7:40 pm local time in Libya, Ambassador Stevens finished a meeting with Turkish Consul General Ali Sait Akin (thereafter feeding speculation that the two discussed weapons shipments through Turkey). Between 8:10 p.m. and 8:30 p.m., a British security team dropped off weapons and vehicles they had used earlier in the day while protecting a British diplomat. Previously, British security arranged to store equipment at the TMF when their diplomatic facilities closed in Benghazi. Stevens retired for the night.496

The TMF attack started at 9:40 p.m. Benghazi time. Gen. Petraeus told the House Select Committee that the attack evidently was not planned. “They can’t even breach the door that is protecting the Ambassador. I mean, that’s a fairly basic task if you are going to do a, quote, ‘attack’ to take something down.”497 According to Gen. Petraeus, the video showed, “They just crawl over the wall, open up the gate, go on in.”498

Witnesses to the attack told a different story. The testimony of Diplomatic Security Agent Scott Wickland during the trial of Ahmed Abu Khatallah described hearing “screams on a security radio as Libyan guards were shot and killed outside the diplomatic compound, then more shots as close to 80 militants overran the grounds and triggered explosions outside Stevens’s quarters after 9:45 p.m. Sept. 11, 2012.”499 A Diplomatic Security Agent offered perspective, “The attack in Benghazi was unprecedented in scope. It’s extremely large. We hadn’t seen anything like that in modern history.”500 Security video from the compound shows explosions at the main gate first at 9:42 p.m. and later at 9:44 p.m.501

Security officials rushed Ambassador Stevens to a fortified safe room at 9:42.502 When the attackers failed to break into the safe room, they used diesel fuel stored in the compound to torch the building and surrounding parked automobiles.503 State Department security in the compound alerted the Annex by radio of the attack as it began, maintained an open radio link with them, and notified the 17th February Brigade as established in a react plan requiring them to “shelter in place, contact your support elements, and wait for their arrival.”504 In two armored Mercedes vehicles, a response team departed the Annex at 10:03 p.m., took heavy small arms fire during the dash, and

503 US Department of State, “Accountability Review Board for Benghazi,” 21. CNN erroneously reported that the fire was started by a rocket propelled grenade. See, CNN Wire Staff, “Bodies of 4 Americans Killed in Libya Returned to U.S.”
arrived at TMF 45 minutes later. Roadblocks and gun trucks set up by the attackers delayed the response team. As they rushed through Benghazi, most of the attackers left the compound using the main gate at 10:05 p.m., with the last one gone by 10:15 p.m. (A Diplomatic Security agent reported that some of the attackers, however, remained in the compound waiting for defenders to come out of hiding.) The 17th February Martyrs’ Brigade, the local militia that had been hired to provide security, entered the compound at 10:38 p.m. before the arrival of the CIA team. The CIA force joined the Martyrs’ Brigade and State Department security officers searching for Stevens and Smith which discovered Smith’s body at 11:01 p.m.

When this initial search did not find the ambassador, all decided to abandon the TMF out of fear that it would be overrun. Five Diplomatic Security officers transported the body of Sean Smith and two classified computers in an armored Toyota Land Cruiser out of the compound through the main gate at 11:16 p.m. The armored vehicles charged through roadblocks blocking the route to the Annex while being pelted with small arms fire. By 11:23 p.m., all State Department personnel escaped the TMF

compound. The Diplomatic Security agents carrying Sean Smith’s body arrived at the CIA Annex at 11:21 p.m.\textsuperscript{512}

The State Department Accountability Review Board described a renewed attack consisting of small arms fire, several RPG rounds, and other explosions lasting fifteen minutes. Video recordings indicated that the CIA team departed through the main gate at 11:19 p.m. in an armored Mercedes G Series wagon as the 17 February Martyrs’ Brigade left through the same gate on foot.\textsuperscript{513} Looting by armed intruders ensued, followed by multiple explosions in each of the buildings. The attackers used Twitter to summon looters.\textsuperscript{514} Attackers disabled two security cameras for 28 minutes.\textsuperscript{515} Video later showed that Libyans rushed Stevens from the compound to the Benghazi Medical Center where Dr. Ziad Abu Zaid attempted CPR to revive him.

Nevertheless, Stevens died of asphyxiation due to smoke inhalation.\textsuperscript{516} Video later showed that Libyans rushed Stevens from the compound to the Benghazi Medical Center, in an area controlled by Ansar al-Sharia, where Dr. Ziad Abu Zaid attempted CPR for 40 minutes. Stevens died of asphyxiation due to smoke inhalation.\textsuperscript{517}

\begin{flushleft}


\textsuperscript{516} Naughton, Gray, and Hines, “Clinton Says Arming Rebels Is Legal.”

\end{flushleft}
4.4.2 First Attack on the Annex

The Toyota Land Cruiser packed with State Department security personnel and Sean Smith’s body entered the Annex at 11:21 p.m. A Mercedes G Series wagon packed with CIA operatives arrived 15 minutes later. The caravan may have inadvertently led the TMF attackers to the CIA compound. Nancy Yousef, writing from Benghazi two months after the attack, found a Libyan who had been guarding the TMF during the fight “thought that the subsequent attack on the CIA compound happened because the attackers had followed the Americans who were fleeing the consulate to the CIA annex.” General Petraeus agreed. Diplomatic Security Agent #3 testified that two vehicles followed them to the Annex.

The Annex received sporadic RPG and small arms fire starting at 11:30 p.m. A Diplomatic Security Agent testified, “[F]or the first 3 hours after we arrived, 3 or 4 hours, there was some volley of fire every 45 minutes to an hour, approximately, there is some exchange. So they would fire in at us, and we would fire back in some capacity.” Approximately 100 attackers assaulted the compound. “It was fire and returned fire for several hours until the second, or the react, or response force from Tripoli arrived.” Then the attack turned deadly.

520 “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 11 (Testimony of David Petraeus),” 958. Hauben speculates that the intent of the TMF attack was to “flush out the covert location and presence of the CIA.” “The Benghazi Affair: Uncovering the Mystery of the Benghazi CIA Annex.”
4.4.3 Second Attack on the Annex

The first assault on the Annex ended at around 3 a.m. A different group of militants probably mounted the second attack. “The assault probably was the work of a new team of militants, seizing on reports of violence at the diplomatic mission the night before and hitting the Americans while they were most vulnerable, [Gen. Carter] Ham said.” Ham noted a degree of sophistication and military training that would not usually characterize militant groups. General Ham testified that the mortar attack “could only be performed by a well-trained team with an observer in a place that could see the impact of the rounds and relay the adjustment to the guns, to the mortars to make the adjustment.” General Petraeus concurred, “[S]peaking as an infantry officer, to put three of those rounds on the roof of a building inside the base is really quite extraordinary.”

Two Marine Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Teams (FAST; specially-trained Marine units capable of rapid deployment) and a CIA team that included Glen Dougherty arrived at the Benghazi airport from Tripoli on a small jet at 1:30 am and entered the Annex at 5:05 am. The first mortar round landed in the Annex 12 minutes later. The first round hit the back of a building. The second landed on the edge of its

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526 U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, “AFRICOM and SOCAFRICA and the Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (Testimony of Carter Ham),” 66.
roof. “And then the next one hit probably pretty center on the roof and killed two and injured one – I am sorry, killed two, injured two.”\textsuperscript{529} Glen Dougherty and Tyrone Brooks died on the roof.\textsuperscript{530} The offensive lasted ten minutes.\textsuperscript{531} Between 30 and 60 heavily armed vehicles operated by the February 17th Martyrs Brigade arrived at the Annex at 6:14 a.m. Personnel at the Annex departed for the airport 20 minutes later in a convoy consisting of Annex vehicles supported by the Martyrs Brigade.\textsuperscript{532} 

\textbf{4.4.4 The Evacuation}

The mortar attack forced a decision to abandon the Annex. Diplomatic Security Agent #3 described evacuation preparations to the House Select Committee: “We destroy sensitive materials, collect anything that we are able to take with us, make arrangements with a friendly militia -- I believe it was Dar al-Libya -- to facilitate our transport to -- or to facilitate our escort to the airport.”\textsuperscript{533} Substantial Libyan units entered the Annex to form a motorcade. Once underway, the Libyan escort stopped traffic to expedite the motorcade.\textsuperscript{534} 

Libyan Deputy Prime Minister Mustafa Abushagour, who met them at the airport, expressed surprise at the size of the American party. He had not known of a CIA facility located in Benghazi.\textsuperscript{535} While waiting to board the plane to Tripoli, Diplomatic 

\begin{footnotes}
\item[530] Hsu and Marimow, “Screams, Explosions and Fire in Benghazi: Bodyguard Details Ambassador’s Last Moments.”
\item[533] “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 2 (Interview of Diplomatic Security Agent #3),” 712. Kelley and Ingersoll, probably erroneously, identified Libyan intelligence units as providing the escort. See, “It’s Time to Discuss the Secret CIA Operation at the Heart of the US Mission In Benghazi.”
\item[535] Schmitt, Cooper, and Schmidt, “Deadly Attack in Libya Was Major Blow to C.I.A. Efforts.”
\end{footnotes}
Security Agent #3 and others received calls from unknown locals using a cell phone
given to Ambassador Stevens by a security agent. Callers told the security team that they
could recover the body of a tall blond American at the hospital. The Libyans did not
know that they had found the ambassador. American officials instructed the hospital to
use “John Doe” on the death certificate “to avoid drawing undue attention to the
importance of the victim as Americans rushed to figure out how to recover Stevens' body
and return it to the U.S.”536 The security team felt that the invitation to pick up the body
“was a dangle, some sort of trying to get us to come down there so they could kill us,
basically, some sort of a trap.”537 After the security team threatened an armed incursion
to obtain the body, Libyan militia brought Ambassador Stevens’ remains to the
airport.538

The small jet that transported the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Teams (FAST)
team to Benghazi departed for Tripoli at 7:31 am with a load of non-security personnel.
A second Libyan C-130 flew the remaining Americans and the ambassador’s body to
Tripoli at 10:00 am. All evacuees flew to Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany at 10:19
pm on board a USAF C-17 Globemaster from Germany to Tripoli.539 Departure and
arrival times of the C-17, tail number 10190, are listed in Table 4.4.

536 Attkisson, “Officials Instructed Benghazi Hospital to List Stevens as ‘John Doe.’”
537 U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi,
538 Hsu and Marinow, “Screams, Explosions and Fire in Benghazi: Bodyguard Details Ambassador’s Last Moments”;
U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi,
“Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 2 (Interview of Diplomatic Security Agent #3),” 716.
539 U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attack in Benghazi, “Final
Report Appendix G: Timeline of Significant Events During the Attacks,” 4–5; Gerstein, “CIA Officers Recount
Benghazi Attack at Trial”; U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist
Attack in Benghazi, “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 2 (Interview of Diplomatic Security Agent #3),” 714; U.S.
Hospital to List Stevens as ‘John Doe.’”
The bodies of Ambassador Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods traveled in another Air Force C-17 to the United States on September 14. President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, UN Ambassador Susan Rice, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Martin Dempsey, and Senators John Kerry and John McCain attended the dignified transfer ceremony at Joint Base Edwards. CIA Director Petraeus did not make an appearance even though Glen Dougherty and Tyrone Woods had worked as security contractors for the CIA in Benghazi. The New York Times later reported, “Officials close to Mr. Petraeus say he stayed away in an effort to conceal the agency's role in collecting intelligence and

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540 Adams, “JBA Hosts POTUS for Ceremony Honoring Benghazi Consulate Victims.” “Dignified transfer” is a highly formulaic procedure in which caskets are solemnly removed from aircraft and placed in a hearse for transfer to the morgue. The procedure almost always takes place at Dover AFB. It is not usually called a ceremony to avoid an expectation that families should attend. A ceremonial transfer with families and media in attendance sometimes takes place at Joint Base Andrews in special circumstances where POTUS attends. See, AFMAO, “Dignified Transfer”, Shane III, “Dignified Transfer’ for Soldier Follows Same, Simple Script.”

541 Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya.”
providing security in Benghazi.” Reports from the transfer ceremony identified the two CIA operatives as State Department contract security officers.

Director Petraeus told the House Select Committee that he did not attend the ceremony because the agency did not want to disclose the facility's existence in Benghazi, later adding, “[O]ne of the QRF members who was killed had told his mother he was doing something else .... It’s why I was not allowed to go to Andrews Air Force Base to be out there. And I didn’t fight this.” When pressed, Petraeus claimed, “But there were intelligence reasons as well.” The reasons have been redacted. See Figure 4.4 The primary goal of the CIA after the attacks became the avoidance of public scrutiny of its activities in Libya.

After the ceremony in Maryland, the caskets were flown to the Charles C. Carson Center for Mortuary Affairs at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, for autopsy and

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542 Entous et al.
543 CNN Wire Staff, “Bodies of 4 Americans Killed in Libya Returned to U.S.”; Baker, “Somber Ceremony as Bodies of Slain Americans Return.”
544 “Interviews of Witnesses, Vol. 11 (Interview of David Petraeus),” 1004–5. See also, Campbell, “Failure Begets Failure: The NATO Quagmire Consumes the U.S. Ambassador to Libya,” 213.
preparation.545 Stevens’ and Doherty’s remains were cremated.546 Woods was buried at Fort Rosecrans National Ceremony in San Diego.547 The location of Sean Smith’s grave has not been disclosed.

4.4.5 Spin

Although the Obama administration initially charged that the TMF attack started as a protest against the Innocence of Muslims film, the State Department revised its explanation after analysis of video of the attack.548 CIA analysts never believed that the film spawned the attacks.549 The CIA did have a concern, however. It worried that identifying the attackers with al Qaeda or “Islamic extremists” could compromise its intelligence operation so the agency’s draft talking points remained vague about the motivation for the attacks.550 The National Security Council, the White House, and the Director of National Intelligence all authored or edited talking points.551 General Petraeus testified that he never knew that United States Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice would receive the talking points for her television appearances.552

As a result, Ambassador Rice said on five September 16 morning television news programs that a protest precipitated the TMF invasion without knowing that the assessment had changed. Rice explained, “I used the information that had been

545 Chadbourn, “Obama Honors Dead from Libya, Vows Resolve in Mideast”; WHYY, “Libyan Consulate Dead Taken to Dover Mortuary.” CBS News reported that the bodies had been taken to an FBI facility at Dover AFB. Attkisson, “Officials Instructed Benghazi Hospital to List Stevens as ‘John Doe’.” However, the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System handles all death investigations across the globe for federal agencies, including the FBI. McMichael, “Without War, Dover Mortuary, Lab Roles Shift.”
547 KGW Staff, “Seal from Ore. Killed in Libya Buried Thurs.”
548 Koppelman, “The Benghazi Failures.”
provided to me by the intelligence community. It was our best current understanding of what had happened. It turned out to be wrong in one critical respect. There wasn't a demonstration outside of our facility in Benghazi...." The House Intelligence Committee found that the intelligence community issued a new appraisal after Rice's television appearances based on additional information. “Once the video footage became available on September 18, 2012, two days after Ambassador Rice spoke, and FBI reporting from interviews with U.S. officials on the ground began to be published on September 22, 2012, CIA changed its judgment and made it clear in a WIRe that ran on September 24th that CIA now believed that no protest had occurred outside the TMF.” (WIRe is the acronym for Worldwide Intelligence Review, an online secure data-sharing platform operated by the CIA Directorate of Analysis that distributes the highest level intelligence analysis to senior government officials and the military.) The dichotomy between the Administration’s initial explanation asserting the existence of a protest and its later judgment describing the attacks as arising from a planned terror raid fueled charges of a cover-up.

4.5 Aftermath

Kriner and Schickler, in their study of Congressional investigations of Presidential activities, demonstrated that the intensity of scrutiny relates more to politics than policy. “We show that Congress, and particularly the House of Representatives, investigate most aggressively precisely when partisan and policy differences between the legislative and executive branches are maximized.”

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556 Kriner and Schickler, Investigating the President, 19.
inquiry into the Benghazi attacks, especially in the House, conformed to this pattern. John Kerry, Hillary Clinton’s successor as Secretary of State, worried that the investigations would become political theater masquerading as a fact-finding exercise. “But I hate to see it turned into a pure, prolonged, political process that really doesn’t tell us anything new about the facts.”557 Despite Secretary Kerry’s lament, Congress undertook the most protracted and most expensive probe in history, involving 252 witnesses in 33 hearings resulting in 13 different published reports. When asked what the hearings accomplished, Trey Gowdy, the representative from South Carolina who chaired the House Select Committee formed to investigate the Benghazi attacks, admitted that they were “utterly useless” and “an unmitigated failure.”558

The attack on the Temporary Mission Facility became a campaign issue in the 2016 and 2020 Presidential elections. On October 13, 2020, President Trump, for example, twice retweeted claims that Vice-president Biden had members of Seal Team Six killed when their shot down helicopter (an actual event) prevented the Seals from disclosing that the raid had killed a body double for Osama Bin Laden and that Bin Laden was still alive.559 The conspiracy theory claims that the diplomatic facility in “Benghazi was attacked to cover up the American origin of the missile used in the helicopter attack.”560

The attacks in Benghazi constitute a unique, persistent event that continues to infest political discourse. While attacks on US diplomatic facilities are not rare — 44

557 Wilson and DeYoung, “Benghazi E-Mails Show Clash Between State Department, CIA.”
560 Funke, “Trump Retweets Benghazi Conspiracy Theory That Falsely Claims Biden, Obama Killed Navy SEALS.”
The attacks in Benghazi constitute a unique, persistent event that continues to infest political discourse. While attacks on US diplomatic facilities are not rare — 44 attacks occurred in the 52 years before Benghazi\textsuperscript{561} — only seven ambassadors have been killed in the line of duty, \textsuperscript{562} all of them since 1968. (See Table 4.5) An ambassadorial death resulting from an attack on its own would be a significant event. Benghazi, however, took on additional importance as Congressional opponents of the Obama administration used it as a platform to launch multiple, highly publicized inquiries.

\textbf{Table 4.5 U.S. Ambassadors Killed on Duty}

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ambassador</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1968</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>John Gordon Mein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Cleo Noel, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>George Curtis Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Rodger Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Francis Meloy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Adolph Dubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Christopher Stevens</td>
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\textbf{4.5.1 Media Attention}

Stories related to the attack in Benghazi have appeared in the press every month since the event. Figure 4.5 shows that between September 2012 and September 2016, stories related to the Benghazi attack appeared in the world press 347 times. On average, 81 articles appeared per month. The fewest number of Benghazi stories (16)

\textsuperscript{561} Shah, “US Diplomatic Missions Attacked at Least 44 Times in 52 Years.” Shah.
appeared in March 2014 when news media fixated on the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 over the southern Indian Ocean. Although the most significant number of stories cluster around the attack event in 2012 (September = 291; October = 314; November = 315), the month with the single largest story count (319) was eight months after the attack in May 2013 when 12 versions of talking points circulated within the Administration following the attacks surfaced, prompting the White House to release e-mails and memos documenting the discussion. Interest in the story never dissipated.

Significant spikes in the distribution of published articles (greater than 100 over four years after the attack) generally correspond to the dates of Congressional hearings. The most significant bump in newspaper articles appeared when the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform initiated a public hearing called “Benghazi: Exposing Failure and Recognizing Courage” on May 8, 2013. The same committee conducted an inquiry dubbed “Benghazi, Instability, and a New Government: Successes and Failures of U.S. Intervention in Libya” starting on May 1, 2014, which lasted through June. As Figure 4.5 illustrates, newspaper coverage spiked during the hearing.

![Figure 4.5 Distribution of "Benghazi Attack" Stories in International Media from September 2012 to Conclusion of House Select Committee in August 2016](image)

Source: LexisNexis Academic. Number of stories containing the phrase “Benghazi attack” in newspapers.
4.5.2 Congressional Investigations 2011-2016

Ten Congressional committees held thirty-three hearings over five years. Although the House Select Committee became the most visible of all the committees in Congress, Table 4.6 shows that multiple House committees and subcommittees investigated Benghazi.

Table 4.6 Benghazi Attacks Hearings in U.S. House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Committee</th>
<th>Title of hearing</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Armed Services</strong></td>
<td>Full Committee Hearing on the Attack in Benghazi</td>
<td>September 19, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subcommittee on Oversights and</strong></td>
<td>Defense Department’s Posture for September 11, 2013: What are the Lessons of Benghazi?</td>
<td>September 19, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investigations</strong></td>
<td>The Security Failures of Benghazi</td>
<td>October 10, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reform</strong></td>
<td>Benghazi: Exposing Failure and Recognizing Courage</td>
<td>May 8, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Affairs</strong></td>
<td>Benghazi, Instability, and a New Government: Successes and Failures of U.S. Intervention in Libya</td>
<td>May 1, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012 and How to Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts, Part I</td>
<td>November 15, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terrorist Attack in Benghazi: The Secretary of State’s View</td>
<td>January 23, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Securing U.S. Interests Abroad: The FY 2014 Foreign Affairs Budget</td>
<td>April 17, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee / Subcommittee</td>
<td>Hearing Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, and Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa (joint hearing)</td>
<td><strong>Benghazi: Where is the State Department Accountability?</strong></td>
<td>September 18, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>The Terrorist Threat in North Africa: Before and After Benghazi</strong></td>
<td>July 10, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing with DNI Clapper, ADCIA Morell, D/NCTC Olsen, and Under Secretary Kennedy</strong></td>
<td>November 21, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing on Benghazi investigation</strong></td>
<td>December 13, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing with CIA’s former Chief of Benghazi Base</strong></td>
<td>November 16, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing with Deputy CIA Director Michael Morell</strong></td>
<td>May 22, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing on Benghazi Investigation</strong></td>
<td>June 14, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing with DCIA Brennan</strong></td>
<td>July 25, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>Full Committee Hearing on Benghazi Investigation</strong></td>
<td>September 12, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td><strong>The Benghazi Talking Points and Michael J. Morell’s Role in Shaping the Administration’s Narrative</strong></td>
<td>April 2, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td><strong>Implementation of the Accountability Review Board Recommendations</strong></td>
<td>September 17, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing Efforts to Secure U.S. Diplomatic Facilities and Personnel</strong></td>
<td>December 10, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td><strong>Status Review of Outstanding Requests</strong></td>
<td>January 27, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td><strong>Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton</strong></td>
<td>October 22, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These committees interrogated 252 witnesses during 33 hearings that lasted more than 62 hours. Five different House committees, plus two subcommittees, conducted hearings related to the Benghazi attack. Only a portion of committee activities have been made public.

The House of Representatives created the Select Committee on Benghazi in May 2014. The Select Committee convened extensive private meetings and interviews before its first public meeting in October 2014. The highlight of the hearings was over 11 hours of testimony by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on October 22. In that hearing, the Committee established to investigate attacks in Benghazi asked 136 questions of the Secretary. Only eight were about Benghazi. (See Table 4.7) The number of Benghazi stories in the media skyrocketed, in part because Secretary Clinton was deeply involved in running for president at the time.

\[\text{Table 4.7 House Select Committee on Benghazi Statistics}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Witness interviewed</th>
<th>107</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional staffers</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total salary of committee staff (through 2015)</td>
<td>$3,590,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost through September 19 2016</td>
<td>$8,035,213.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily cost</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions posed to Secretary Clinton</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions to Sec. Clinton about Benghazi</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The number of Benghazi attack articles surged again at the beginning of 2016 when, on January 6, the Select Committee set a record for Congressional investigations. “As of Wednesday, the House Select Committee on Benghazi has been in existence for
609 days, surpassing the length of time the 9/11 Commission took to investigate the terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on Sept. 11, 2001." The House Select Committee took an astounding amount of time to investigate the Benghazi attack. Table 4.8 compares time spent in previous major inquiries. The Committee existed almost two-and-a-half times longer than the 9/11 Committee and three times longer than the joint committee that investigated the attack on Pearl Harbor. It remains the most protracted investigation in the history of the House of Representatives.

**Table 4.8 Length of Historical Congressional Investigations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigation</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Harbor (Sept. 11, 1945 to Jun. 20, 1946)</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurricane Katrina (Sep 15, 2005 to Feb 15, 2006)</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/11 (Feb. 14, 2002 to December 20, 2002)</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The House Select Committee commandeered resources on a monumental scale previously or subsequently unmatched by an investigative committee. The Committee employed 46 staffers who interviewed 107 witnesses that informed four public Committee meetings. See Table 3.8. Committee members or staffers interviewed witnesses on 117 days between October 9, 2012, and July 14, 2016. All witnesses save

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563 Kumar, “Benghazi Panel to Issue Report Later This Year.”
one – Hillary Clinton – testified behind closed doors.Democratic members appointed to the House Select Committee estimated the cost of the investigation to exceed $8 million. To put this in perspective, the direct costs of all House Select Committee activities in 2015 approached $4 million. Table 4.9 compares the 2015 expenditures of the Select Committee with that of other major committees in 2015. The direct expenditure figure exceeded budgets for five other standing committees in the House. By comparison, the House of Representatives hearings leading to the first impeachment of President Trump cost around $3 million, according to the Heritage Foundation. The Mueller probe into Russian election interference in the 2016 election, an investigation not conducted by Congress, cost $32 million over two years, but the probe recovered about $16 million in fines and forfeitures from the conviction of Paul Manafort.

Table 4.9 House Select Committee on Benghazi Budget Compared With Budgets of Other Major House Committees in the 114th Congress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Benghazi</td>
<td>$3,721,871.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td>$3,708,056.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Veterans’ Affairs</td>
<td>$3,053,722.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Ethics</td>
<td>$2,864,060.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Small Business</td>
<td>$2,534,362.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Rules</td>
<td>$2,450,303.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Benghazi Research Center, “Number of permanent House committees that have spent less in 2015 than the Select Committee on Benghazi. [Committee Reports from 114th Congress, Committee on House Administration, accessed 5/4/16.]” http://benghazicommittee.com/benghazi-by-the-numbers/.

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566 Benghaz Research Center, “Benghazi: By the Numbers.”
567 Fry, “Impeachment Has Cost Taxpayers Millions of Dollars.”
568 Barrett, “Mueller Submits Final Tab for Investigation: Nearly $32 Million.”
The Senate conducted its own review of the Benghazi attack. Table 4.10 lists the names and dates of hearings. The Select Committee on Intelligence acted as the main investigatory hearing for the upper chamber. It met on four days in sessions spread over two years. Of 33 Congressional hearing days on the Benghazi attacks, only seven were in the Senate.

Table 4.10 Bengalzi Attacks Hearings in the Senate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senate Committee</th>
<th>Title of Hearing</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select Committee on Intelligence</td>
<td>Hearing on the Attacks in Benghazi</td>
<td>November 15, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benghazi: The Attack and the Lessons Learned</td>
<td>December 20, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Foreign Relations</td>
<td>Hearing With General David Petraeus Re: His Knowledge of the Attacks on U.S. Facilities in Benghazi, Libya</td>
<td>January 15, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee on Armed Services</td>
<td>Department Of Defense’s Response To The Attack On U.S. Facilities In Benghazi, Libya, And The Findings Of Its Internal Review Following The Attack</td>
<td>February 7, 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs held its hearing a week after the attack, followed two months later by the first hearing before the Intelligence Select Committee. Although this Committee met to investigate the Benghazi attacks and
aftermath three times as often as any other Senate committee, it concluded its work just five months after the attacks. The Committee, in fact, finished by the end of 2012 but reconvened two years later to interrogate David Petraeus once the former CIA Director resolved criminal charges brought against him for unlawful possession of classified materials he had kept at his house after leaving government service.

Other than the Petraeus hearing on January 15, 2014, all Senate committees concluded work in five months. The House investigations last 51 months. It did not end until the Select Committee on Benghazi dissolved on December 12, 2016.

Most of its work remains classified.

5 METHOD

To reveal the roles images play in Cascading Activation Models, this study utilizes a quantitative and qualitative content analysis, as well as a grounded theory analysis of media images, to assess the reporting of the attack on the CIA/State Department facilities in Benghazi. The subsequent analysis of Benghazi attack images proceeded in three phases. The first phase involved the construction of a corpus of “image packages” from the archives of four major newspapers that served as the unit of analysis. Each "image package" consisted of the name of the publication using the image, photo captions, headline for the article illustrated by the image, name of the person or organization identified by the newspaper as creating the image, name of the article author, and date of publication. In the second phase, coders rated each image package for specific content according to a detailed coding manual constructed after

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pilot tests guided needed revisions in the instrument. Finally, an analysis of coding results and inductive development of categories completed the analytical process.

5.1 Development of the Corpus

Based on standard retrieval practices common employed in earlier content analyses, this study relied on the search term "Benghazi attack" in the LexisNexis database to identify stories about the attacks in the four major newspapers the year following the Benghazi raid. The search phrase "Benghazi attack" removed stories unrelated to the attacks emergent from searches utilizing the "Benghazi" term alone. American media outlets employed the term "attack" to describe the hostile engagements that occurred at the Temporary Mission Facility and the CIA compound. Additional searches employing the terms "Benghazi fight," "Benghazi terror attack," "Libya attack," and "Benghazi CIA" verified that the "Benghazi attack" search term alone avoided the omission of relevant stories. Articles identified in the validation search either already appeared in the initial search results or did not pertain to attacks at the Benghazi compounds.

To assess the media coverage of the Benghazi attacks, this study examined the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal. These four entities constitute the top four newspapers in the United States in terms of "hard copy" circulation and website traffic to digital editions. The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal occupy the top tier of American journalism, while the Los Angeles Times and USA Today are considered "quality" newspapers. The Los Angeles Times and USA Today are known for their in-depth coverage and investigative reporting, while the New York Times and Wall Street Journal are generally more focused on national and international news.


Times and USA Today are "large circulation newspapers representing a wide geographic distribution across the United States."\textsuperscript{572} Significantly, Entman’s definition of media in the Cascading Activation Models theorizes “a cueing system that runs roughly from the pinnacle occupied by the New York Times and a few other elite outlets to other national media, to regional newspapers, and to local papers and television stations.”\textsuperscript{573} Although an analysis of images in these outlets lacks ready generalizability to the full range of available American coverage,\textsuperscript{574} the selection of the nation’s largest newspapers permitted the sampling of the visual information available to audiences without the addition of confounding variables such as “pack” or “copycat journalism.” Further, each of the selected newspapers interface extensively with national and international political elites,\textsuperscript{575} a factor critical to the foundations of Cascading Activation Models. The inclusion of the major newspaper websites to the study recognized the growing popularity of news acquisition through online venues even when hard copies of the same content are available.\textsuperscript{576}

### 5.2 Scope of the Investigation

The time frame of the analysis covered one year following the Benghazi attack. The single year constituted sufficient time to discern the evolution of frames resulting from the interaction between media and political elites as theorized by the Cascading

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\textsuperscript{573} Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 420.

\textsuperscript{574} Entman, “Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents,” 9.


\textsuperscript{576} Prior content analysis studies examined images found on news magazines, newspapers, and television websites. See, for example, Schwalbe, Silcock, and Keith, “Visual Framing of the Early Weeks of the U.S.-Led Invasion of Iraq,” 452.
Activation Models and exceeds that of similar media content analyses. Here, the one-year parameter yielded 698 discrete images and allowed sufficient time to allow frames to flow through the cascade. Manual examination of each article determined whether a story included an image, text, or both elements. Articles without images as well as duplicated stories did not qualify for inclusion in the database. Figure 5.1 shows the number of images drawn from each newspaper.

![Figure 5.1 Number of Benghazi Attack Images Published by Each Newspaper]

The newspapers’ websites displayed five types of images: photos (n=457), video (n=211), maps (n=18), cartoons (n=8), and graphs (n=5). As expected, photographs comprised the largest class of images. The website content frequently employed

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577 For examples of studies using less than a year, see: Bowman, Lewis, and Tamborini, “The Morality of May 2, 2011 (1 day)”; Fahmy, “Picturing Afghan Women: A Content Analysis of AP Wire Photographs During and Post-Taliban Rule” (7 days); Emmons and Mocarski, “She Poses, He Performs: A Visual Content Analysis of Male and Female Professional Athlete Facebook Profile Photos.” (7 days); Entman, “Punctuating the Homogeneity of Institutionalized News” (10 days); Jameson and Entman, “The Role of Journalism in Democratic Conflict Management” (14 days); Entman, “Framing U.S. Coverage of International News: Contrasts in Narratives of the KAL and Iran Air Incidents” (14 days); Cissel, “Media Framing”; Bowe, Fahmy, and Matthes, “U.S. Newspapers Provide Nuanced Picture of Islam” (31 days).
photographs as the click-buttons to launch videos or collections of photos. If those images did not form part of the subsequent presentations, they served as photos in the analysis; if they appeared at the beginning of the subsequent presentations, they functioned as part of the videos. Figure 5.2 demonstrates the relative frequency of photographs, still images, and videos.

Figure 5.2 Frequency of Image Types in the Database

5.3 Sources of Images Available to the Cascade

5.3.1 Images Published by the Four Newspapers

As Chapter one explains, Cascading Activation Models hypothesize that any actor, especially the Administration, injects information into the discourse on a policy topic. Determining the originator of images allowed analysis of the hierarchical structure implicit in the models. Content analysis of caption and attribution information that the newspapers published alongside the images identified the source of a majority of the images in the database, that is, those where information was available.

To determine whether the administration attempted to establish or contest competing visual frames, a Freedom of Information Act request sought access to images
that the Administrative released during the year following the attack. A February 11, 2016 request to the State Department for pictures resulted in a decision on May 16, 2018 that provided two records responsive to the request and denied access to other documents exempted from disclosure "material the release of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual’s personal privacy."\(^{578}\)

Continuous monitoring of ongoing FOIA lawsuits against the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Justice, and Department of State (Accuracy in Media v. Department of Defense, et al.\(^ {579}\)) attempted to find additional images available from the government. A 2015 release of Department of Defense materials about the Benghazi attacks resulted from the settlement of a FOIA lawsuit.\(^ {580}\) The Department of Justice and CIA likewise disclosed a limited number of heavily redacted documents in response to FOIA lawsuits. The respective agencies’ Virtual Reading Rooms set up pursuant to 5 U.S. Code §552 (a)(1), (2) made the documents available to the general public for viewing.

The State Department possessed most of the Benghazi documents eventually made public. Eight FOIA lawsuits resulted in the declassification and accession of thousands of documents now archived in the State Department Virtual Reading Room. Table 5.1 lists State Department FOIA cases reviewed for this study. Monitoring of FOIA lawsuits against the State Department on peripheral matters, such as those resulting in the disclosure of Secretary Clinton’s personnel records and the operation of the Clinton Foundation (Judicial Watch v. State Department\(^ {581}\)), as well as the release of Secretary

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\(^{578}\) U.S. Department of State, “Response to FOIA Request by Michael Jablonski, Case F-2016-01018.”

\(^{579}\) Accuracy in Media v. Department of Defense, et al., 1:14-cv-01589-EGS.


Clinton’s separation documents (Competitive Enterprise Institute v. Department of State\(^{582}\)) ensured that no documents released in those cases had any bearing on the existence of the State Department’s relevant images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Name</th>
<th>Court Number</th>
<th>FOIA Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy in Media v. Department of State</td>
<td>14-cv-01589 (D.D.C.)</td>
<td>F-2014-03625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial Watch v. Department of State</td>
<td>14-cv-0511-ABJ (D.D.C)</td>
<td>F-2014-08848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Kawa v. Department of State</td>
<td>9:15-cv-81560 (FLSD)</td>
<td>F-2014-21579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{582}\) Competitive Enterprise Institute v. Department of State, 1:15-cv-00553 (D.D.C.).


\(^{584}\) U.S. Department of State, “State Magazine Archive.”

### 5.3.2 State Department Publications

A review of the annual issues of the State Department publication *Diplomatic Security: The Year in Review* for 2012-2014 also produced photographs about the Benghazi attack including the source of photographs.\(^{583}\) Similarly, a collection of images found in the State Department’s internal publication, *State Magazine*, included source material published in the year following the Benghazi attacks.\(^{584}\)
5.3.3 Evidence in Criminal Trials

Court proceedings associated with the criminal trials of Ahmed Salim Faraj Abu Khatallah and Mustafa Muhammad Mufta Al-Imam provided access to case dockets through the United States Courts Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) tool. The dockets contained, among other things, lists detailing images used as evidence. While the dockets referenced images, the courts "do not have video hosting capabilities and most courts do not make trial exhibits such as photos, maps, and diagrams available via PACER."587

5.4 Coding the Images

5.4.1 Development of the Coding Instrument

Coding of image packages for specific content proceeded after the creation and verification of the corpus. Following the procedure of Shelton and Skalski, a coding manual provided specific coding instructions, including descriptions of each option with textual and pictorial exemplars for heightened clarity.

Working independently, three coders performed a pilot test on 10 percent of the images. Comparison of each coder's results in the pilot test identified ambiguous or confusing instructions. Interviews with each coder provided further insight into problems with the coding manual. A reformulated coding manual addressed the problems uncovered in the pilot test and served as the basis of the study's analysis.

Using a pilot study approach employed by Kolbe and Burnett, discussion of the

588 Shelton and Skalski, “Blinded by the Light,” 344.
589 Such a procedural recommendation occurs in Neuendorf, The Content Analysis Guidebook, 146.
590 Kolbe and Burnett, "Content-Analysis Research," 245.
meaning of key terms and joint review of images achieved consensus between the coders, as such a method has functioned as the basis of content analyses related to visual and textual content.  

5.4.2 Content of the Coding Instrument

The finalized coding instrument consisted of nine categories: (1) the camera angle in relation to the photo subject; (2) the identity of people in the picture; (3) the perceived ethnicity of the photo subject; (4) the number of people in the picture; (5) whether the picture showed weapons, (6) whether the picture displayed destruction of property, (7) the presence or absence of protestors, (8) whether the photo showed military personnel; and (9) the scenic location of the picture.

The coding instrument gave three choices for identifying camera angles: looking up, looking down, and looking level at the photo subject. The various options each conveyed a different aspect of perceived power. Based on the findings of previous experimental studies, a camera looking down at a photo subject communicates weakness. A low camera shooting upward elevates the subject and conveys attributes indicative of strength, such as salient authority or dominance. A level camera angle


establishes “symbolic equality” between the viewer and subject, communicating that they possess equal power.594

The instrument presented twelve choices to catalog the identity of the human subjects displayed in the photographs. The options included Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Susan Rice, David Petraeus, Christopher Stevens, both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, both Barack Obama and Susan Rice, both Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice, the victims of the Benghazi attack (Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods), members of the United States Congress, other victims, and a null choice for images that did not include any human subjects. The choices covered the principals involved in the Benghazi attacks and its response.

The instrument had four options to identify the ethnic affinity of the human. Those included American, Western but not American, other, and a null choice. The decision to examine the ethnic affinity of the photo subjects relates to one element of perceived in-group and out-group status.595

The instrument included four choices related to the number of people. The instructions required coders to assign values for sets of one person shown in an image, two to ten people, more than ten people, and a null selection when no people appeared. The cataloguing of the frequencies of individuals appearing within the images aided understandings of whether the pictures focused on human interest, mob-action, or political frames.
The coding instrument also included options related to the appearance of a *weapon* in a picture. Dichotomous coding for this characteristic simply required a yes or no assessment. The presence of weapons in the images portrayed violent military or terrorist activity.

The *destruction of property* coding category identified images exhibiting damage to buildings, vehicles, or other non-human subjects. The instrument presented a dichotomous choice, although a yes response required further determination of whether the picture showed active or completed destruction. Property destruction images deemphasized the personalization of victims and the Benghazi attack as an international incident.

The coding instrument presented two choices related to *protestors*. Those options required an assessment of whether or not the activity depicted in the image constituted a demonstration or some other action. The use of protest frames communicates a “problematic event ... including the attribution of blame and causality.”

The instrument included four coding options for *military presence*. The coding instrument provided four choices related to the identity of the photo subject: Civilians, military, mixed civilians and military, and neither military nor civilian. The presence of military personnel supports the avowal of a war frame for Benghazi, while their infrequent usage avoids such a focus on security matters.

The coding instructions for *location of the picture* analyzed the scene depicted in each photograph. Recognizing that the Benghazi controversy spanned the globe, coders

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596 Johnston and Noakes, *Frames of Protest*. 
determined whether the central location of a picture was Benghazi; somewhere in a Middle Eastern or North African country but not Benghazi; the United States; neither the United States, North Africa, nor the Middle East; or that the scene was impossible to determine. Portrayals of global reaction to the Benghazi attacks demonstrates a focus change from international to domestic issues as the Benghazi debate mutates from a foreign policy to a domestic/political issue.

5.4.3 Coding Process

Acting independently, two coders assigned values for each category to each image in the corpus. Coders received training on using the instrument verbally with specific reference to the instrument. Written instructions reminded coders that they could consider the headline, the caption, the source, the author, and the date when coding, although they could code many images by simply observing the image itself.

This study employed Freelon’s ReCal OIR to calculate intercoder agreement and intercoder reliability values. The two sets of calculations compared the entire set of coded image results to most accurately reflect the relationship between the two coders. This study used Krippendorff’s alpha to determine intercoder reliability because of its flexibility. It "employs covariance-based correction for chance," thereby resolving a significant criticism of the percent agreement measure. Landis and Koch developed a scale that considered any reliability >.80 to be "almost perfect," with

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598 According to O’Connor and Joffe, “There is little consensus regarding the proportion of the data set that facilitates a trustworthy estimate of ICR .... 10-25% of data units would be typical” (“Intercoder Reliability in Qualitative Research,” 5; Also see, O’Connor and Joffe, Dahmen, Miller, and Morris, “The Depth of Hurricane Katrina Imagery,” 136.
599 O’Connor and Joffe, “Intercoder Reliability in Qualitative Research,” 8.
Krippendorff himself declared that any value >.80 constituted a "reliable value."\textsuperscript{602} Krippendorff's alpha calculated for the coding of all but one of the variables in this study exceeded 0.900.

Table 5.2 displays both percentage agreement between the coders and the intercoder reliability score for each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Krippendorff's alpha</th>
<th>Percent Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camera angles</td>
<td>0.919</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic affinity</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>0.909</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestors</td>
<td>0.916</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of picture</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military presence</td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I employ qualitative grounded theory to analyze the descriptive statistical findings developed from the coding process.\textsuperscript{603} Grounded theory entails both an inductive and deductive analysis of data. An inductive approach develops codes and categories directly from the data, while the deductive approach applies codes and categories suggested by prior research.\textsuperscript{604} Contextualized grounded theory allows “connections between local worlds


\textsuperscript{603} Strauss, \textit{Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists}.

\textsuperscript{604} Cho and Lee, “Reducing Confusion about Grounded Theory and Qualitative Content Analysis,” 4; Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis}, 103.
and larger social structures.” A qualitative inspection of image packages establishes frames attendant to the development of foreign policy in the case of the Benghazi attacks. Recurrence of coded values informs inferences about frames.

6 HIERARCHY

The hierarchical relationship between actors constitutes an essential feature of the Cascading Activation Models. The models assume that foreign policy proposals emanate from Administrators at the top of the cascade and flow down to other elites and media before coming to the attention of the Public. While the model works well to describe the evolution of text-based frames, it fails to explain how images create frames. This chapter discusses the role of images associated with the Benghazi attacks at each level of the cascade.

6.1 First Level: Administration

Entman places the Administration at the top level of the Cascading Activation models on the assumption that the executive branch both initiates foreign policy proposals and can employ greater persuasive power than any other actor. The Obama Administration acquired many images recording the attacks from surveillance cameras in Benghazi but chose not to release them. As such, the Administration minimally participated in the image cascade.

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605 Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*, 133.
### 6.1.1 Images Accredited to the Administration

In this study’s dataset, U.S. government agencies received credit for only eight photographs. Bloomberg, Associated Press, and Reuters shared credit for the government images they circulated, and two other images likely originated from government agencies. Table 6.1 charts the number of photographs credited to each federal agency in the database. The injection of a small number of government-sourced images into the public discussion indicates that the Administration did not primarily try to influence the formation of frames using images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Pictures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISAF/AP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters/White House</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomberg/White House</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Embassy Tripoli</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Terrorism Task Force</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least two additional pictures originated from the government, but the newspaper publications did not credit the photographic sources appropriately. The *Los Angeles Times* illustrated its September 12, 2012 article written by David S. Cloud about Marines deployed to Libya with the official State Department portrait of Ambassador Chris Stevens (See Figure 6.1). The paper credited the Associated Press for the photograph. The *LA Times* also ran the same photograph on the same date but attached it to a different story written by Ned Parker. In that instance, however, the

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607 Cloud, “About 50 Marines Heading to Libya to Increase Security at Embassy.”
California-based outlet gave credit to the White House. Media outlets outside the scope of this study correctly identified the originating source as the State Department. As an example, First Post, an Indian news and media site in Mumbai, credited both the State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Libya for the Stevens photo. KCRA, the Hearst television station in Sacramento, also acknowledged that the photograph came from the U.S. Department of State. The Facebook page of the U.S. Embassy in Libya continued to make the portrait available for distribution as of September 10, 2021.

The second unaccredited government photograph accompanied a November 13, 2012 Wall Street Journal story. The paper wrote about questionable tactics that an FBI agent used while investigating charges that David Petraeus, then the Director of Central Intelligence, inappropriately disclosed classified material to his biographer. (See Figure 6.1) USA Today used the same picture but gave credit to ISAF – International

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608 Parker, “US. Ambassador to Libya, 3 Other Americans Killed in Consulate Attack.”
609 Firstpost, “Images: US Consulate in Libya under Attack.”
610 TeSelle, “Ambassador Left Mark on Northern Californians.”
611 U.S. Embassy Libya, “Christopher Stevens.”
612 Barrett, Gorman, and Barnes, “FBI Agent in Petraeus Case Under Scrutiny.”
Security Assistance Force (the military mission to Afghanistan) – and the Associated Press when it published the photograph on November 12, 2012.\textsuperscript{613} \textit{Stars and Stripes}, the independent daily tabloid newspaper published within the U.S. Department of Defense, reported on February 21, 2013, that the photograph taken on July 13, 2011, had been “made available on the International Security Assistance Force’s Flickr website.”\textsuperscript{614}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure6_2}
\caption{ISAF Photograph of Gen. David Petraeus and His Biographer Used by USA Today and the Wall Street Journal}
\end{figure}

Military.com credits the ISAF Flickr page for the photo, dating it in 2010.\textsuperscript{615} The photo no longer appears on the Military.com website nor on the Flickr pages for ResoluteSupportMedia, the non-combatant NATO unit deployed to Afghanistan to distribute ISAF photos and other media. According to the RSM Flickr page, “Images uploaded to Flickr are free for dissemination by media outlets and all other interested persons or organizations for newsworthy or educational media products,” along with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{613} Stanglin, “In Speech, Paula Broadwell Raised Benghazi Details.”
\item \textsuperscript{614} Carroll, “Army Reverses Paula Broadwell’s Promotion; Investigation Continues.”
\item \textsuperscript{615} Sisk, “Back on Capitol Hill, Petraeus Atones for Sharing Intel with Mistress.”
\end{itemize}
photo credit to “ISAF Public Affairs.” The Los Angeles Times credited “ISAF/AP.” However, the image does not appear in the collection of 2,244 photos for “Petraeus” made available by A.P. Images as of September 9, 2021.

The White House received credit on three images: the State Department portrait of Ambassador Stevens; a Los Angeles Times picture published April 17, 2013 of President Obama listening to a briefing on the Boston Marathon bombing; and a Los Angeles Times photo published October 31, 2012 of President Obama taken by Pete Souza, the official White House photographer, in 2009 during an interview conducted by David Gregory, formerly the NBC News Chief White House Correspondent. The Los Angeles Times assigned credit to Reuters and the White House for the April 17, 2013 photo. Similarly, it credited Pete Souza and Bloomberg for the October 31, 2012 image.

The U.S. Embassy in Tripoli received credit on March 13, 2012, from the Wall Street Journal for a video of Ambassador Stevens discussing his desire to work in Libya. (See Figure 6.3) The Los Angeles Times gave credit to the embassy in Tripoli for a picture “posted on the Facebook page of the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli shaking hands with a Libyan.” The picture remained on the website as of August 29, 2021. Although the video used by the Wall Street Journal no longer appears on the embassy website or Facebook page, three screen grabs from the video remain on Facebook. The existence

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616 ResoluteSupportMedia, “About.” Although ISAF no longer provides the photo of Petraeus and Broadwell, numerous other Flickr pages preserve it. See, for example, Cidmonster at tinyurl.com/qf66ed66.

617 Associated Press, “Petraeus.” The number of photos depicting David Petraeus is actually less than 2,244 because a handful of images show Petraeus’s wife or events that Petraeus attended but does not appear in the picture. Holly Petraeus is newsworthy herself because of her extensive work to educate former soldiers about consumer finance.

618 Nicolas and Favole, “Obama Now Takes the Lead After Attacks on Americans.”

619 Goldberg, “Goldberg: Benghazi -- No Mere ‘October Surprise.’”


621 U.S. Embassy Libya, “Ambassador Stevens at Tripoli, Libya.”

of screenshots from the video supports the inference that the newspaper acquired the video from the Facebook page.

The final set of pictures in the dataset credited to the government consists of an assemblage of seven photographs released in May 2013 by the FBI on its “Most Wanted” website. (See Figure 6.4) The accompanying text relates that the bureau sought “information about individuals who were on the grounds of the U.S. Special Mission when it was attacked.”623 Only the Wall Street Journal distributed the FBI photos of the newspapers studied.624 The FBI never reported where or how it acquired the pictures. Nevertheless, the FBI’s assertion that the suspects shown in the photos “were on the grounds of the U.S. Special Mission,” as well as camera angles looking down from a height, support the inference that the source of the images came from surveillance

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623 FBI, “FBI Seeking Information.”
624 Gorman, “FBI Seeks Three Men Over Attack in Benghazi.”
cameras in the diplomatic compound. If so, the FBI release in May 2013 constitutes the only public images from the onsite surveillance video. The video remains classified.

The FBI released the only government-produced images injected into the public discourse. Eight images originated from the government—seven where a government agency received some credit plus the official Stevens portrait that the L.A. Times credited to the Associated Press (which also credited the same picture to the White House in a different story on the same date) and the picture of David Petraeus and Paula Broadwell. All eight of these images appear on government websites.

6.1.2 Images Available to the Administration

The State Department controlled the majority of images that would eventually be made public. It shared images with the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and the intelligence community, particularly the Central Intelligence Agency.
The total number of images held by the Administration cannot be known since many (if not most) of the images remain classified. However, the public record demonstrates the existence of a large number of photos and diagrams by various divisions of the executive branch.

Department of State. The State Department produced 3,163 pages of documents to the House Select Committee investigating the terrorist attacks in Benghazi. The documents included 115 images, which included the repetitive appearance of 26 images that inflated the total.625 (See Table 6.2)

Table 6.2 Census of Images Provided to the House Select Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents supplied to House Select Comm, Vol 1 (all DoS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>368</td>
<td>Google map of Benghazi compound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>679</td>
<td>Photo of Libyan family strolling past American flag in Benghazi; a photo taken seconds after a car exploded</td>
<td>Libyan family photo credited to AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>680</td>
<td>Plume of smoke after Tibesti Hotel blast. Pictures of Villa A, and house adjacent to Villa A.</td>
<td>Tibesti Hotel blast picture credited to AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1253</td>
<td>Diagram of TMF compound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1274</td>
<td>Picture of attack on motorcade of U.N. Special Envoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>Map showing location of attack on U.N. Special Envoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1632</td>
<td>Libyan flag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>Map of Sahel showing flows of smuggled material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>Photo of Libyan demonstrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1642</td>
<td>Map of Mediterranean region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td>Diagram of Africa showing location of Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>Map of Libya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents supplied to House Select Comm, Vol 2 (all DoS, 1424 pages)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247-8</td>
<td>12 pictures of details at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>256</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268</td>
<td>Six pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289-291</td>
<td>Ten slide Powerpoint: Security Negotiations and Agreements 17 pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-301</td>
<td>12 pictures of security issues at proposed TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>603</td>
<td>Photo of protestors storming U.S. Embassy in Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>865-879</td>
<td>15 pictures showing security improvements in TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1351</td>
<td>Aerial view of TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1352</td>
<td>Aerial view of TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1365</td>
<td>Aerial view of TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1366</td>
<td>Aerial view of TMF compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents supplied to House Select Comm, Vol 3 (768 pages)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with two pictures (Libyan with gun; Neither picture credited. First picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with two pictures (Libyan with gun;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>protesters going over the wall at U.S. Embassy Cairo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with picture of Libyan with gun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with picture of Libyan with gun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Picture of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with picture of Libyan with gun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Map of Libya and Egypt with picture of Libyan with gun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>Picture of Rep. Frederica Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>328</td>
<td>Two editorial cartoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>Photo of memorial card signed by American Foreign Service Association members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>515</td>
<td>Photo of memorial card signed by American Foreign Service Association members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>518</td>
<td>Photo of memorial card signed by American Foreign Service Association members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>525</td>
<td>Photo of memorial card signed by American Foreign Service Association members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>581</td>
<td>Photo of Rep. Kay Granger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>610</td>
<td>Photo of young Libyans presenting flowers and condolences to the villa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>657</td>
<td>Photo of Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>742</td>
<td>Map of countries protesting the film</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The State Department made a small number of photographs public in response to Freedom of Information Act requests. The department declassified seven photographs.
of damage to the Benghazi diplomatic compound on May 28, 2013 in response to FOIA request F-2012-41837 by Judicial Watch submitted May 31, 2013.626 A response dated November 8, 2013, released 32 additional records that included 21 photos.627 Seven of the photos illustrated news articles that the State Department had clipped that included Associated Press or AFP/Getty Images distributed images. Photos detailing damage to the compound declassified on November 1, 2013, comprised the remainder of the release. Judicial Watch published all of the photos it obtained through FOIA requests on its website, and the State Department included them in its Virtual Reading Room.628

On May 15, 2018, the Department of State provided two documents comprising 42 photographs to Michael Jablonski in response to a FOIA request filed in 2016.629 The first document consisted of 21 images that included four photographs previously provided to Judicial Watch. The second group of 21 pictures had to be declassified for release. None of these pictures appeared in any of the four media outlets in this study. The pictures included in this FOIA response do not appear in the State Department Virtual Reading Room except where provided to Judicial Watch.

The State Department also used photographs that never appeared in the newspapers studied here, although most images it released first appeared in other media publications. The State Department Bureau of Diplomatic Security, for example,
publishes an annual compendium of problems at diplomatic facilities called Diplomatic Security Year in Review. The review for 2012, released in June 2013, contained seven images about the Benghazi attacks. Four of the images, all headshots of people killed in the attacks, came from “Private Collections.” The publication credits Reuters for a picture of the facility burning and A.P./Wide World Photos for pictures of the return of remains.

The State Department used its own photos in internal publications, indicating that it possessed images they never made public. State Magazine, a monthly internal publication for staff, published twelve photos related to Benghazi in the year following the attacks. The twelve photos in the November 2012 issue included seven pictures taken at the dignified return of remains ceremony and three pictures showing Ambassador Stevens as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. Isaac Pacheco, the editor of State Magazine, received credit for the dignified return photos. The Peace Corps photos credit Amie Bishop, a Peace Corps Volunteer who had served contemporaneously with Ambassador Stevens. The October 2012 issue published a single picture from the repatriation of remains ceremony that appears to be the product of the State Department. The magazine used a picture of Sean Smith taken by Elio Fucile in a story reporting the naming of an executive conference room for Sean Smith. None of these pictures appeared in any media outlets analyzed in this study. Although the State Department possessed photographs relevant to the Benghazi controversy, it did not inject them into the debate.

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631 US Department of State, 26, 46.
633 US Department of State, “State Magazine, October 2012.”
Department of Justice. Photographs taken in the Benghazi compound comprised a significant category of evidence in the criminal trials of Ahmed Abu Khatallah\textsuperscript{635} and Mustafa Muhammed Mufta al-Imam\textsuperscript{636} held in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. The FBI apprehended both defendants in Libya in separate raids. After transport to the United States, separate indictments charged them with multiple crimes, principally, conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists resulting in death.\textsuperscript{637}

An FBI written record dated June 27, 2017, known as a Form 302, detailed the interrogation of Ahmed Khatallah onboard the \textit{USS New York}. It references photographs taken from surveillance video of the attacks. The report states that Khatallah identified one attacker “as depicted in the TMF surveillance photos previously shown to Khatallah by interviewing Agents.”\textsuperscript{638} Moreover, the interview log recounts that, “Khatallah was shown photographs from the 79-page photobook containing images from the surveillance video taken during the 11 September 2012 attack on the US TMF in Benghazi, Libya,” from which he identified attackers shown in photos identified as BC1GATE21460082.bmp, 1BGATE22031723.bmp, and 1BGATE00004183.bmp.\textsuperscript{639}

The trial court, in a Memorandum Opinion signed by Judge Christopher Cooper on June 15, 2018, recited that at the eight-week trial which commenced on October 2, 2017, the government presented “video and phone record evidence of Abu Katallah’s involvement in the attacks and links to other perpetrators.”\textsuperscript{640} Identified in the trial

\textsuperscript{635} United States v. Khatallah, 1:17-cr-00141-CRC (USDC DC, 2014).
\textsuperscript{636} United States v. Al-Imam, 2017-cr-00213 (DCD, USDC DC, 2020).
record as Government Exhibit 301, the government presented “several hours of surveillance video footage from the Mission compound during the attack.” The Libyan government had retrieved video from multiple surveillance cameras at the Temporary Mission Facility that they consigned to the CIA sometime after September 18. During the second week of the Katallah trial, for example, “Many of the photographs of the buildings that the FBI took were projected onto screens for the jury, Khatallah, his attorneys, and the audience to view. Photos showed the ladder that security agents climbed to reach the CIA annex roof where CIA operatives Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods died, and where State Department Diplomatic Security Agent David Ubben suffered life-threatening injuries.” The defense urged in closing argument that the quality of the video “created reasonable doubt” as to the identification of Khatallah at the Mission.

The Government’s Exhibit List filed before the al-Imam trial demonstrates the magnitude of the number of photos available to the Administration. The 37 page Exhibit List contains 1258 exhibits, including everything from autopsy photos, shrapnel from a mortar round, a burned American flag, photos of the capture, and much more. The list identifies 69 video clips and 24 photos evidencing the attack and its aftermath. Table 6.3 shows exhibit numbers for images and the government’s description of the exhibits filed with the court.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>188-V1</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips C1 Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188-V2</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips C1 Gate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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642 Morell, The Great War of Our Time: The CIA’s Fight Against Terrorism—From al Qaeda to ISIS, 231.
643 Sirota, “Benghazi Trial Enters Second Week.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>188-V3</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips C1 Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188-V4</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips C1 Gate</td>
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<td>188-V5</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips C1 Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>188-V5B</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips B Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>188-V5C</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips</td>
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<td>188-V5D</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips</td>
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<td>188-V6</td>
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<td>188-V6A</td>
<td>Mission Video Clips B Gate</td>
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<td>188-V7A</td>
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<td>189-VA</td>
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<td>189-VB</td>
<td>Mission Clips B Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>189-VC</td>
<td>Mission Clips B Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-1</td>
<td>Photo of House Burning Bilal Al- Ubaydi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-2</td>
<td>Photo of House Burning Bilal Al- Ubaydi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190-3</td>
<td>Photo of House Burning Bilal Al- Ubaydi</td>
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<tr>
<td>190-4</td>
<td>Photo of House Burning Bilal Al- Ubaydi</td>
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<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission – Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300A</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-C</td>
<td>Still – Camera 1-B Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-D</td>
<td>Stills of Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>300-E</td>
<td>Stills of Mission</td>
</tr>
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<td>300-F</td>
<td>Stills of Mission</td>
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<td>300-G</td>
<td>Stills of Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>300-H</td>
<td>Stills of Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-2B</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12 C1 Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-4</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 9 C3 Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-5</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 8 C1 Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>301-8</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 2 Ext TOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-9</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 1B Gate/9C3 Drive/4 Hi East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-10</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 1B Gate/9C3 Drive/4 Hi East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-11</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 1B Gate/9C3 Drive/4 Hi East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-12</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-14</td>
<td>1B Gate/9C3 Drive/4 Hi East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-15</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12C1 Drive/1B Gate/9 C3 Drive/6 Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-16</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12C1 Drive/1B Gate/9 C3 Drive/6 Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-17</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12C1 Drive/1B Gate/9 C3 Drive/6 Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-18</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12C1 Drive/1B Gate/9 C3 Drive/6 Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-20</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 1B Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-21B</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 12 C1 Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-23</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-27B</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 9 C3 Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-28</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-29</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-31</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 1B Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-33</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 10 C3 Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-35</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - 4 Hi East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-37</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-40</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-41</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance - 1B Gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-48</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-60</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - Clip 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-64</td>
<td>U.S. Special Mission Surveillance Footage - C3 Gate Clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304-1</td>
<td>ISR Footage-US Special Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304-1A</td>
<td>ISR Footage -US Special Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304-1B</td>
<td>ISR Footage-US Special Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304-2</td>
<td>SR Footage-Annex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304-5</td>
<td>ISR Footage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305A</td>
<td>Mission Video Stills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-1</td>
<td>Annex Compilation Footage - Clip 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-2</td>
<td>Annex Compilation Footage - Clip 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-3</td>
<td>Annex Compilation Footage - Clip 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-4</td>
<td>Annex Compilation Footage - Clip 4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-5</td>
<td>Annex Video Clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-7</td>
<td>Annex Video Clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-10</td>
<td>Annex Compilation Footage Clip 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-11</td>
<td>Mortar Strike Wall View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-12</td>
<td>Mortar Strike Side Yard View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-14</td>
<td>Mortar Strike Combination View</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305-15</td>
<td>Sheep Farm View</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After receiving clearance from the CIA, the FBI took hundreds of photographs to examine the diplomatic and CIA facilities as crime scenes. Special Agent Michael Byrnes testified at the Khatallah trial, “Investigators took entry photographs before removing evidence and exit photographs to show what scenes looked like upon leaving.” Although the photographs existed in 2013, the Department of Justice did not release them until the Khatallah trial four years later.

Department of Defense. The Air Force made available Senior Airman Steele C.G. Britton’s photographs that depict the September 14 dignified transfer ceremony at Joint Base Andrews (e.g., Figure 6.5). Although the Air Force posted photos on its official website, none of them appeared in the newspapers studied.646

![Figure 6.5 Dignified Transfer of Remains Ceremony Photograph Taken By Senior Airman Steele C.G. Britton](image)

The Pentagon possessed videos from drones flying over the attacked facilities. An unarmed MQ-1B Predator drone (tail number 3208) operated by the 18th Reconnaissance Squadron at Creech Air Force Base in Clark County, Nevada flying a mission somewhere in North Africa via satellite link diverted to Benghazi a few minutes

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after 4:30 p.m. Eastern time (10:30 p.m. in Benghazi) and arrived at 5:11 p.m. The “[c]ameras captured images of burning buildings....” An Air Force Sergeant appearing at the Select Committee as “Sensor Operator 1” estimated that his aircraft produced 2½ hours of video. A second drone relieved the first one when it approached the end of its available flight time. The fresh Predator stayed over the compound for about 4 hours then watched the evacuation of the CIA Annex. Sensor Operator 2 remembered, “And then we were told once they had everybody loaded to follow them to the airport, and then watch the airport and scan for threats until their plane actually lifted off the ground.”

Officials from the Department of Defense inspected and photographed the ruined facilities in Benghazi in October 2012. The House Select Committee requested an opportunity to review pictures taken at that time as well as tapes of video feeds from the night of the attacks. “The Defense Department failed to respond to the Committee’s request.” Although the Committee’s Final Report states that the Defense Department “provided nearly 900 pages of additional documents not previously provided to Congress,” none of these documents appear in any of the three-volume “Documents Provided to the Select Committee.”

**White House.** The White House provided 740 pages of documents to the House Select Committee on Benghazi, including 25 images. The image material provided to the Committee duplicated eight images. Very few of the White House documents supplied to the House Select Committee originated with the White House. The Department of State supplied almost all the documents turned over by the White House and all but four of the images. Members of Congress produced four images that the State Department did not furnish in press releases that included a personal picture. The Benghazi images database does not include any of the White House images.

The Select Committee Final Report states, “In total, the White House made nine productions of documents to the Committee.” One production delivered 266 pages of emails. While the Committee did not disclose the content of the other documents produced by the White House, the volume of material produced exceeds the number of documents disclosed by the Committee in its “Documents Provided to the Select Committee” report.

**Central Intelligence Agency.** The CIA produced 13 pages of documents to the Select Committee. One image – a map – appeared in the production. (See Table 6.2)

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654 None of the four pictures in the database credited in whole or part to the White House appeared in the submission of documents to the House Select Committee. Similarly, although the State Department generated most of the White House documents produced to the committee, none of those documents appear in the State Department submission to the committee.
The Committee, however, reviewed more than “4,000 pages of ‘read and return’ documents at the CIA.” The review of documents led to several rounds of additional document requests that resulted in an undisclosed number of materials. None of this material appears in the Committee’s formal disclosure of documents.

6.2 Second Level: Other Elites

“Members of Congress and their staffs, and sources from the community of Washington policy experts and lobbyists (former government officials, think tank denizens, university sages, interest groups, and public relations firms)” populate the second level of the Cascading Activation Models. Although inquiries into the Benghazi incident prolonged the policy debate, Congressional participation in the discourse remained verbal and textual but not visual. No images used by the newspapers studied emanated from Congress or other elites.

Congress produced very few photographs during the time studied here. Rep. Jason Chaffetz, at a hearing of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on October 10, 2012, displayed eight slides he believed to be pertinent to the investigation. (See Figure 6.6) The Committee published the pictures as “Benghazi Attack Pictures, Supplemental Photos” on the same date as the hearing.

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661 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Oversight & Government Reform, “Benghazi Attack Pictures, Supplemental Photos.”
The “Supplemental Photos” do not credit a photographer. However, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, a member of the Committee, had spent eight hours in Benghazi on October 6, 2012. Rep. Chaffetz’s description of the slides during the October 10 hearing suggests that he took the pictures on his visit four days before unveiling the photos before the Committee on Oversight and Government Affairs. If so, the pictures constituted the only images that the Congress produced in the year following the attacks. None of the images appeared in the newspapers. No evidence supports the participation by other of Entman’s elites in establishing frames based on Benghazi images.

6.3 Third Level: Media

Entman describes his third level of the cascade as a “network of journalists” consisting of “reporters, columnists, producers, editors, and publishers who work for the

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662 Landler, “For Skeptical Lawmaker, Doubts on Attack Were Sown in Whirlwind Trip to Libya.”
important national media.”

Media, according to Entman, serves as “a key transmission point for spreading activation of frames” because members of the Administration and Other Elites regularly interact “with upper-tier journalists.”

Çeçen argues that even in the absence of conflict between the Administration and elites, “journalists have strong professional motivations to include oppositional readings of foreign policy.”

6.3.1 News Services Produced Most of the Images

In the case of the Benghazi attack photographs, news services supplied 68% of the public images (n=468), while the newspapers themselves accounted for 12% (n=86). A significant number of images (18%, n=133) did not contain source information. Table 6.4 lists all of the sources of images and the number of images attributed to each source. The table lists more credits than the number of images in the study because the newspapers credited many images to multiple sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associated Press (AP)</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getty Images</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agence France-Presse/Getty</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agence France-Presse</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Press Photo Agency</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomberg</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuma</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyodo News</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliyet</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

663 Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 420.
664 Entman, 420.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Agency/Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Charlotte Observer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUSA-TV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSWB San Diego</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTLA Los Angeles</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algerian TV</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Embassy Tripoli</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISAF</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Terrorism Task Force</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doherty family</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quigley family</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassy of Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoeye/EyeQ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WorldStream</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Earth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool photo</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kasnic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pew Research Center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ Denver</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Intelligence Group</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntelCenter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No credit</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>728</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Press agencies</th>
<th>Print Media</th>
<th>Broadcast Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplied the majority of images, including the Associated Press (n=199), Getty Images (n=75), Reuters (n=88), Agence France-Presse (n=68), and European Press Photo Agency (n=28). Bloomberg (n=6) and Zumapress (n=3) supplied substantially fewer images. Agence France-Presse, the oldest news service globally (founded 1835),\(^{666}\)

\(^{666}\) Toal, “Global News (Service) Networks,” 199.
entered into a distribution agreement with Getty Images in 2003. As a result of the agreement, both AFP and Getty receive credit for 64 AFP-produced images.667

6.3.2 Images Produced by Newspapers

Each paper supplemented news service-supplied images with staff photographs and graphics produced in-house. The New York Times published 44 images that its photographers took, in addition to one that included shared credit with Associated Press. USA Today illustrated stories with 22 images that its staff produced. The Los Angeles Times credited itself on 12 pictures. The Wall Street Journal used six of its own photographs. Sixteen Wall Street Journal images apparently created in-house did not receive credit.

The media outlets studied here did not assign credit to 128 images, or 18% of the dataset. 73% (n=93) of the unaccredited images appeared in the Wall Street Journal. Table 6.5 demonstrates that the number of unaccredited Wall Street Journal images surpassed the combined number of unaccredited images displayed in the other newspapers. Statistically, the Wall Street Journal should have many uncredited images because it produced 51% of the images in the database of this study. (See Table 6.5) However, the percentage of images shown by the Wall Street Journal without credit (26%) exceeds the percentage for the other papers. Uncredited pictures by each of the other three papers accounted for 2% or less of the entire dataset, while the Wall Street Journal’s noncredited images formed 18% of the corpus.

667 press.gettyimages.com, “Getty Images and Agence France-Presse Renew Leading Global Content Partnership.”
Three factors inflated the number of noncredited Wall Street Journal images: graphics created by the paper, use of reporting pool images, and repeated use of images. The paper may have generated at least 25 images internally but did not credit itself. The images included maps (n=10), multi-panel images (n=7), an image with a dark background and white text (n=5), photographs and text in a single panel image (n=2), and a posed image of the United States and China flags (n=1). The website employed these constructs to denote special reports or features. The dark images with text, for example, marked a slide show that the paper used five times as an accompaniment to other stories (October 5, 10, 16, 17, and 18, 2013). Table 6.6 displays the stories illustrated with the dark image graphic. Across a very dark picture of one of the burned-out diplomatic facility buildings, text repeated President Obama’s remarks about Benghazi from the Rose Garden at the White House on September 12: “We will not waver in our commitment to see that justice is done for this terrible act. And make no mistake, justice will be done.” The paper labeled the section “U.S. Government Reaction to the Benghazi Attack. Follow some of the administration statements on the Libya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Pictures not credited</th>
<th>Uncredited percentage of all pictures</th>
<th>Percentage of pictures in newspaper unaccredited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Times</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA Today</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>18%</strong></td>
<td><strong>26%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The laudable quotation conflicts with the negative tone of headlines roaring about “discord,” “security cut,” and assignations of blame and responsibility for the attacks. Repetition of image and text reinforces the discordant message and normalizes a belief that the Administration did not handle the Benghazi affair well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>“Discord Skewed Benghazi Response”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>“Security Cut Before Libya Raid”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>“Clinton Accepts Blame for Benghazi”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>“Obama takes responsibility for Libya”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>“Militant Suspected in Attack in Libya Remains at Large”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Wall Street Journal created unaccredited images and galleries. The paper used images as website anchors that served as gateways to further content by creating a series of images (n=5) composed of five or six partial pictures edited together in a single frame. The paper also created galleries (n=4) comprised of headshots in a single frame to illustrate stories about groups of people, such as confidants of President Obama or candidates to replace Secretary of State Clinton and CIA Director Petraeus.

No available information about these constructed images suggests that the government originated these images.

The Wall Street Journal often used photographs provided by reporting pools. “Pool reporting” refers to the practice of credentialing a limited cadre of reporters or

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670 Nicholas and Entous, “Obama Confidantes Get Key Security Jobs”; Nicholas and Barnes, “Rice Ends Bid Amid Criticism.”
photographers to cover an event who then share their reporting or images with a more significant number of colleagues “without attribution.” For example, in the case of White House coverage, a rotating pool of about 90 journalists feeds information to over 8000 media outlets.\textsuperscript{671} The Benghazi photos database includes thirteen photographs the \textit{Wall Street Journal} published without credit from the three presidential and one vice-presidential debates. The Commission on Presidential Debates, the organization staging the events, required media pooling.\textsuperscript{672} These photographs, taken at political events in articles that reference the Benghazi attacks, demonstrate a shift towards politicizing the story. In the same sequence illustrating the electoral debates, the \textit{Wall Street Journal} assigned credit to Getty Images for four pictures, three to A.P., one to Bloomberg, one to “Photo:” and one to “TKAWDFS.”\textsuperscript{673} Since no information about any of the debate images suggests that government sources provided them, they occupy the middle level of the cascade.

Once the \textit{Wall Street Journal} published an uncredited image, it tended to re-use it. The paper used a noncredited photograph of a destroyed vehicle eleven times on five days to illustrate various stories. The picture showed examination of the wreckage by a single individual as a crowd watched in the background. The caption for the photograph read on ten instances: “Timeline: Past Attacks. Past attacks on U.S. embassies and consulates around the world.” One use did not have a caption. Although the stories accompanying the images mentioned the Benghazi attacks, they covered topics as varied as a shooting in Yemen, U.S. relations with Egypt, and regional protests. The articles

\textsuperscript{671} Schultz, “Journalists: Cite the Pool Report.”
\textsuperscript{672} CPD, “2012 Debates.”
implicitly generalized the Benghazi attacks as characteristic of U.S. problems throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Table 6.7 lists the Benghazi attack stories illustrated with the bombed car image. Notably, the photograph depicted the after-effects of a bomb blast at a United Nations building in Peshawar, Pakistan, on September 3, 2012. Agence France-Presse distributed the same photograph and accompanying story, with other media assigning credit to A. Majeed/AFP.674 The Wall Street Journal did not provide context or a location for the image.

Table 6.7 WSJ Stories Illustrated with a Photo of a Car Bomb Attack in Pakistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2012</td>
<td>“U.S. Policy in Mideast Challenged by Assaults”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2012</td>
<td>“Libya Attack Sparks Crisis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2012</td>
<td>“Protests Put Egypt Relations on Edge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 2012</td>
<td>“Protest Clashes Rage in Region”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15, 2012</td>
<td>“Mideast Turmoil Spreads”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17, 2012</td>
<td>“Anti-U.S. Mobs on Rampage”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17, 2012</td>
<td>“Amid Chaos, Extremists Spur Violence”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20, 2012</td>
<td>“Libyans see al Qaeda Hand in Embassy Attack”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20, 2012</td>
<td>“Miscues Before Libya Assault”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 11, 2012</td>
<td>“U.S. Embassy Security Aide Shot Dead in Yemen”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the Wall Street Journal did not credit a photograph of a destroyed vehicle in front of a charred Special Mission Compound building it used on three occasions. The image served as a button to open “Related video: In the wake of the deaths of four American diplomats in the Middle East, WSJ reporters assess the impact foreign policy might have on the campaign. Moody’s threatens the U.S. with a downgrade and Bill Clinton continues to stump for Obama.”675 Ibrahim Alaguri, a

Stringer for the Associated Press, deserved credit for the photograph, as the A.P. Images web store lists this photo as ID: 532223466192, created and submitted on September 12, 2012, by Ibrahim Alaguri.\textsuperscript{676}

While the other newspapers in the study used similar techniques as the \textit{Wall Street Journal} when creating visual content, their behavior did not appear as pronounced because of the lower frequency of pictures they displayed about the Benghazi attacks and the relative frequency of pictures not credited. The \textit{New York Times}, for example, utilized panels of multiple images on three occasions. It also created maps, two noncredited and one credited to itself. The paper repeated noncredited use of a single picture depicting a man carrying an automatic weapon as a pickup truck mounting a heavy machine gun crossed a desert landscape on four occasions.\textsuperscript{677} The pictures illustrated stories about terror in the Sahara, specifically Algeria. The \textit{New York Times} photo originated as an Agence France-Presse story about conflicts between Tuareg and Arab communities in Algeria.\textsuperscript{678}

The cavalier attitude of the newspapers – as evidenced by failing to credit images correctly, the absence of contextual and location information for images, and the use of images from one country to illustrate stories about another – creates reasons to doubt the stories about Benghazi as told through images. Deceptive images to attract readers to special features or videos exemplify a failure to be candid with readers. Ordinary readers lack the resources to determine, for example, that the image accompanying stories entitled “Libya Attack Sparks Crisis” (September 13, 2012), “Miscues Before Libya Assault” (September 20, 2012), “Libyans See al Qaeda Hand in Embassy Attack”

\textsuperscript{676} Alaguri, “AP Images ID: 532223466192.”
\textsuperscript{677} Nossiter and Macfarquhar, “Algeria Sowed Seeds of Hostage Crisis as It Nurtured Warlord.”
\textsuperscript{678} AFP, “New Clashes in Southern Algeria, at Least 9 Dead Since Tuesday (Press).”
(September 20, 2012), and “U.S. Embassy Security Aide Shot Dead in Yemen” (October 11, 2012) were, in fact, depictions of a car bombing in Pakistan.

6.3.3 Fourth Level: Public

In Entman’s formulation, the Public may both receive frames generated by media and cause information to flow back to higher levels of the cascade through “polls and other indicators.”  The Public only contributed three images to the study’s database. The family of one CIA contractor killed in the Annex assault provided photographs of Glen Doherty to the media. The Los Angeles Times credited the published photograph to the Doherty family. The Quigley family provided two pictures to the Associated Press, one used by USA Today and one used by the New York Times. All three photographs ran on September 13, 2012. The Public did not contribute any other images to the database.

Images illustrated stories that reported the public’s attitude towards issues. Entman included polls as a mechanism allowing public participation in the cascade. USA Today published stories about polls that mentioned the Benghazi attacks. Table 6.8 lists the stories, the images employed, and credit for the images. All of the stories but one featured pictures of Pres. Obama. The pictures of the President came from news services. Although Entman identifies polls as one way that the Public participates in the policy debate, nothing in the data supports an argument connecting images from the Public with the polls. The evidence shows minimal public participation in the cascade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/14/2013</td>
<td>“Poll: Fewer than half of Americans following Benghazi”</td>
<td>Pres. Obama</td>
<td>Getty Images</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

679 Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 419.
680 Entman, “Cascading Activation.”
### 6.4 Benghazi Images Do Not Demonstrate A Functioning Cascade

#### 6.4.1 Origin of Benghazi Attacks Frames

The “waterfall” metaphor explicit in the Cascading Activation Models fails to describe the process of image frame creation using images in the Benghazi attacks reporting. While Cascading Activation Models acknowledge that images constitute a dynamic factor in policy formation, the models flounder in the attempt to describe how visual material functions. This study demonstrates the inadequacy of the models in describing image news frames. In the case of the Benghazi attacks, the media almost exclusively interject images into policy discourse. Further, the models describe framing images as flowing up to the Administration and anti-Administration elites – a contravention of the cascade metaphor - but down to the Public. The description of image flows in the models reflects the strain required to place images in the cascade. Entman writes, “As is true of actual waterfalls also, moving downward in a cascade is relatively easy, but spreading ideas higher, from lower levels to upper, requires extra energy—a pumping mechanism, so to speak.” The models never identify the mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/15/2013</td>
<td>“Poll: Fewer than half of Americans following Benghazi”</td>
<td>Bar graph</td>
<td>No credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/20/2013</td>
<td>“Poll: Obama agenda to get stuck in mud over Benghazi, IRS”</td>
<td>Pres. Obama</td>
<td>AFP/Getty Images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/20/2013</td>
<td>“Poll: Obama agenda to get stuck in mud over Benghazi, IRS”</td>
<td>Pres. Obama +1 other person</td>
<td>AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/30/2013</td>
<td>“Poll: Voters want special prosecutor for IRS case”</td>
<td>Pres. Obama</td>
<td>AP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
energizing the so-called pumping mechanism. Framing images introduced in the middle of the cascade quickly flow downward to the Public but somehow contemporaneously ascend to higher levels. The necessity for a pumping mechanism constitutes a concession that the formation of foreign policy frames using images constitutes an exception to the cascade hypothesis.

The first research question asks whether visual frames originated at the media level of the cascade as theorized in the CAM/CNAM models. Although the Cascading Activation Models proposed that frames originated with the Administration, they asserted that the media injects images into the framing debate. No other level of the cascade produced framing images according to diagrams of the models. The study here found very few images emerging from the Executive, Oppositional Elites, or the Public. Results from the Benghazi attacks database analysis diverged from the model when they failed to uncover any recursion of image frames up the cascade from Media to the Administration or Oppositional Elites.

Entman’s discussion of images in the cascade limits their use to journalists and media. Entman’s discussion of images in the cascade limits their use to journalists and media. In contrast, Figure 6.7 graphically shows that press agencies produced an overwhelmingly large number of the images used to illustrate the Benghazi attacks stories, with newspaper outlets contributing an insignificant amount of original content.

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681 Entman, 422; Entman, “Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy,” 90.
At best, eight images attributed to the government exist. Only one image – the FBI montage – had been released to the cascade.

![Figure 6.7 Image Credits by Industry Category]

While Cascading Activation Models include “news organizations” in the same box as the “media,” the formulation fails to acknowledge the outsized power that press agencies exercise in creating frames. (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2). While consistent with prior work by Paterson, Artz, and others, the findings here extend their analysis by arguing that the dominant role of press agencies undermines any belief that images participate in the cascade. Press agencies not only “set the agenda for what international stories other media carry through the choice of stories they distribute and the amount of visuals provided,”⁶⁸² but they also supply framing images from a position outside the cascade. Newspapers primarily rely on news agencies for stories and pictures from war

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zones because “it is far cheaper to buy news from an international agency than to go out and get it.” Entman’s conception of framing practice in foreign policy debates emphasizes “specific choices of politically consequential words and images in the news.” Images made available by press agencies constrain meaningful image choices by journalists functioning within the cascade. The limited assemblage of images presented by news agencies establishes frames adopted by newspapers, rather than newspapers establishing frames and then searching for images tending to persuade readers to adopt them. When describing the operation of the cascade in the development of foreign policy, Entman assumed that journalists “go through some strategic thinking in deciding how to frame their stories.” At least in the case of images in the Benghazi press accounts studied here, the results belie that fundamental assumption. Press agencies supplied a startling number of photographs to illustrate Benghazi stories through a process dominated by the news agencies with minimal input from publication editors.

The insignificant number of images released to the cascade by the government, the absence of participation in the cascade by Congressional and other oppositional elites, and the lack of input by the Public leave the media level of the cascade as the dominant producer of framing images of the Benghazi attack. However, a core assumption of the Cascading Activation Models holds that newspapers and journalists contrive frames in response to proposals trickling down from higher levels of the

686 Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 422.
687 Paterson, “The Transference of Frames in Global Television.”
cascade. The Benghazi images demonstrate that frame formation using images did not emerge as a response to policy discussions that the Administration, Congress, or other elites conduct. Nor do the images evidence that other levels of the cascade responded in any way to media construction of frames.

The Benghazi attacks images force a reappraisal of the media’s role in framing. Entman famously defined framing “as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation.” In the Benghazi database, media outlets acted as a conduit for images provided by press agencies. The images selected for publication did not result from an overt effort “to promote a particular interpretation.” On the contrary, the record of the Benghazi images demonstrates a lack of care in selecting images for publication. The newspapers used images without assigning proper credit, even though other publications availed themselves of accrediting information. For example, the Los Angeles Times incorrectly credited pictures of Ambassador Stephens (Figure 6.1), and the Wall Street Journal did not credit a picture of General Petraeus (Figure 6.2). The Wall Street Journal illustrated eleven stories on topics as varied as Benghazi, Egypt, and Yemen with a picture of a destroyed automobile—without ever disclosing that the image depicted a car bombing in Pakistan. (See Table 6.6). Further, a large number of unaccredited images (n=128), mainly in the Wall Street Journal (see Table 6.4), supports the conclusion that choosing images to publish did not involve significant conscious effort for the editors.

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688 Entman, “Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power,” 164.
The pictures in the Benghazi database conformed to the requirements of Cascading Activation Models to the extent that the media injected them into the debate. The images, however, originated outside the cascade. Although press agencies supplied a majority of the images, they did not receive information from higher cascade levels.

6.4.2 No Hierarchical Relationship Between Originators of Images

The second research question asks whether a hierarchical relationship exists between the originators of images in the cascade as theorized for text. Entman postulated that framing discussions in foreign policy began at the top level, descended to other elites, and plunged into media attention before tumbling into public perception. While the theory asserted that, "each succeeding level in the hierarchy of this model has some potential impact," no evidence in the Benghazi images database supported an argument that any level other than the one occupied by media influenced formation of the image frames. Other than a single image released by the FBI, the Administration did not release any photographs. Congress, oppositional elites, and the Public did not develop visual frames. Only the media published images.

The Administration, as shown here, warehoused many images that could have informed discussion about the Benghazi attacks. The most probable explanation for avoiding an image frames battle could be an Administrative belief that the Benghazi attacks debate constituted a dreadful narrative that would be prolonged by a disputative release of images. The Administration sought to obscure a substantial CIA presence in

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689 Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 420.
690 Fahmy, Relly, and Wanta, “President’s Power to Frame Stem Cell Views Limited,” 65.
Benghazi, as demonstrated by the identification of Glen Dougherty and Tyrone Brooks at the Dignified Transfer of Remains Ceremony. The ceremony recognized the two as State Department contract security officers when in fact they worked for the CIA.\(^{692}\) The CIA Director did not attend the ceremony, with the agency admitting that he stayed away “in an effort to conceal the agency’s role.”\(^{693}\) The CIA later refused a request by the House Select Committee on Benghazi to release the testimony of the fifteen CIA operatives who had appeared before the Committee.\(^{694}\)

Not everyone in the Administration agreed with the approach. Michael Morell, the acting CIA director after Gen. Petraeus resigned, urged the Administration to release the videos recording the attack. He wrote in his autobiography:

> After reviewing the information in the video, I was in favor of releasing it publicly. Doing so would have helped Americans better understand the nature of the attack. I do not know why the White House did not release the information—this despite urgings to do so from Jim Clapper, the director of national intelligence, and from other senior intelligence officials, including me. The videos, at this writing, still have not been declassified.\(^{695}\)


\(^{693}\) Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya.”


The Obama administration never explained its reluctance to release images it controlled. The choice of the Administration and other elites to engage media-created framing images means that a hierarchical flow of information did not exist.

7 VISUAL FRAMES OF THE BENGHAZI ATTACKS IMAGES

7.1 Benghazi Attacks Visual Frames

Entman argued that frames diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe by selecting and emphasizing culturally resonant aspects of an issue. Tewksbury and Scheufele added that effective frames “build associative connections between an issue and particular considerations relevant to its definition, causes, implications, and treatment.” All frames found in this study fulfill one or more of the purposes that Entman proposed.

This study analyzed visual frames by identifying the substantive and stylistic aspects of published images. Frame construction involved isolating aspects of a message to influence perception of events, as previous studies have documented that interactions between frames and viewer schemas constitute a fundamental mechanism in propagating judgments of reality. Entman concluded, “Those frames that employ more culturally resonant terms have the greatest potential for influence. They use words and images highly salient in the culture, which is to say noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged.” Images tend to more energetically resonate than text because they simulate reality and straightforwardly

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696 Entman, “Framing,” 52.
communicate meaning.\textsuperscript{701}

### 7.1.1 Issue Definition Category

Entman proposed four news frames that influence media coverage generally. The first, “defining effects or conditions as problematic,” acts as an important basic function of news frames because defining the problem often virtually predetermines the rest of the frame.\textsuperscript{702} Three constituent frames delimited contentions regarding perceived problems raised by the Benghazi attacks: location, destruction, and ethnic affinity. Figure 7.1 demonstrates the relative frequency of these frames in the Benghazi attacks dataset.

![Figure 7.1 Relative Frequency of Problem Definition Framing Components](image)

The attacks themselves constituted the archetypical focus of the Benghazi controversy. Moreover, the rampage materialized on a foreign continent during a time when Americans became “deeply skeptical of greater U.S. engagement in a corner of the world that looks increasingly unstable.”\textsuperscript{703} Each of the three definition frame components incorporated elements of havoc on a foreign shore. Location, defined in the coding

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Messaris and Abraham, “The Role of Images in Framing News Stories.”
\item Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 417–18.
\item Stokes, “Americans on Middle East Turmoil: Keep Us Out of It.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
instrument as the scene of the picture (if any), established whether the issue could be characterized as a domestic or foreign problem. Use of location pictures refined the worldview of the user, engaging schemata based upon emotions attendant to the concept of home.

Classification of images by apparent ethnic affinity further clarified the problem by identifying the subject of pictures primarily as Western or something else. The classification informed analysis of in-group or out-group perceptions. While location and ethnic affinity queries facially appeared to uncover similar information, they complemented each other by probing qualities missing from the pictures. Not all images depicted identifiable locations. For example, the database contains eight graphs and five cartoons. In all, the database contained 100 images of indeterminate location. In other situations the interpretation of location and ethnic affinity diverged. Two days after the attacks the *Wall Street Journal* published a picture of two young women dressed in *abayā* and *hijāb* while holding candles and a photo “during a candlelight vigil in honor and memory of slain American Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens.”704 Although the costume communicated Arab affinity, the vigil took place in front of the Libyan United Nations Mission in New York.

Images of damaged buildings, vehicles, and any other non-human objects informed the destruction of property visual frame. The pictures communicated violence both completed and in process. A series of photographs apparently taken just after the attacks showed buildings and automobiles on fire at the American mission. Other images featured buildings in the compound heavily covered in soot.

704 Coker and Entous, “Mideast Turmoil Spreads.”
Location, ethnic affinity, and destruction established the definitional frame by providing context for information communicated by pictures related to the Benghazi attacks.\textsuperscript{705} Since frames establish a central organizing idea,\textsuperscript{706} the three components of the definitional frame in the Benghazi pictures database direct the viewer to process information in terms of locations (MENA and the United States), ethnic affinities (American and non-Americans), and destruction (burning or burnt buildings, cars, and flags). The three elements develop a definitional frame because, as explained by Baden, “The central organizing idea abstracts from the very concrete instance of the frame, but remains concrete enough that the frame’s structure follows necessarily from the application of the idea to a given set of information.”\textsuperscript{707} The frame established a cognitive focus for organizing information.

Location (n=598, 58\%) appeared most often in the database, almost double the frequency of the next most recurring frame component. Four scenic components constituted the location frame: Benghazi (n=98), United States (n=287), Middle East/North Africa other than Benghazi (n=180), and venues outside the U.S. or the MENA region (n=33). Determining location for an image required analysis of information ensconced in the image package. The components of the package, as defined in Chapter 4, included photo captions, headlines on the article illustrated by the image, and the photo itself, as well as four other information categories not relevant to identifying location. Textual information in the image package “disambiguate image content, constrain elaboration, and guide integrative interpretative.”\textsuperscript{708}

\textsuperscript{705}Geise and Baden, “Putting the Image Back Into the Frame.”
\textsuperscript{706}Gamson and Modigliani, “The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action.”
\textsuperscript{708}Geise and Baden, “Putting the Image Back Into the Frame,” 63.
Using picture captions and article headlines as supplementary information, a location could be assigned to 85.6% of the images in the database. The large percentage reflected the importance of location as a frame. The United States appeared as the site for over 41% of all pictures in the database. Benghazi images only constituted almost a third as many pictures as images located in the United States, even though the issue arose in Benghazi and the city name became the title for events connected to the attacks. (See Table 7.1). The number of pictures located in the U.S. exceeded even the combined number of Benghazi and MENA images.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
<th>% of location images</th>
<th>% of all images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benghazi</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA not Benghazi</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not USA or MENA</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Images from the United States dominated the collection of Benghazi attacks pictures, indicating both a focus on domestic issues rather than a foreign policy controversy but also an assessment that the United States comprised an in-group with the rest of the world populating an out-group. The primary focus of location frames in the Benghazi pictures – the United States – reflected a bias based on belief in American exceptionalism. Alexis de Tocqueville first described Americans as exceptional in Democracy in America, "The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no other democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one."709 Exceptionalism manifested “the idea that the United States of America is in

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some way different from other countries.” The concentration of U.S. images in the Benghazi attacks pictures corpus communicates a distinction between America and the balance of the world, especially MENA.

The relative scarcity of pictures depicting Benghazi during the first two months following the attacks can be explained in terms of the centrality of exceptionalism to American identity. The Benghazi attacks constituted an affront to the concept of American exceptionalism. The deaths of two U.S. diplomats and two CIA guards, as well as the evacuation under fire of a large contingent of CIA operatives, represented a defeat for the United States. More than the physical defeat, destruction of the U.S. contingent in Benghazi constituted a rejection by an Arab faction of U.S. assistance. The Benghazi attacks asserted Arab self-determination in contravention of the Western “belief in the lack of Arab agency (due to insufficient rationality) required to break free from authoritarianism and other oppressions, so that the path of liberation had to be learned from the West.” An essential element of American exceptionalism articulated a belief that principles of American polity constituted universal principles for America to propagate. Exceptionalism, in turn, comprised a significant component of U.S. national identity. The resistance of newspapers to use Benghazi pictures evidenced a perception that those pictures not only publicized U.S. loss to an Other but also wounded U.S. national identity by repudiating hallowed beliefs. Benghazi pictures characterized defeat. In contrast, pictures of locations in the U.S. renewed American identity.

711 Gani, “From Discourse to Practice,” 53.
Benghazi images acquired an identity as a symbol for any terror attack outside the U.S. The publication of pictures showing scenes not located in the U.S. conflated Benghazi as a location with images from elsewhere in the Middle East, North Africa, and even Asia. As an example, the *Los Angeles Times* published a picture from Lahore, Pakistan, in a story referencing Benghazi.\(^{714}\) Similarly, an image of protestors in Jakarta, Indonesia, illustrated a *Wall Street Journal* article on September 19, 2012, headlined, “Libyans Struggle to Rein in Militias.”\(^{715}\) Images showing scenes in Middle East/North Africa (MENA) constituted 26% of the images database, surpassing the number of Benghazi pictures, emphasizing the prioritization of a broader narrative about the region.

The high number of images from the area corresponded with coverage of violent reactions throughout the Muslim world contemporaneous with the Benghazi attacks. As an example, the *Los Angeles Times* published a story on October 8, 2012, analyzing the change in American attitudes about aiding Egypt after the Benghazi attacks. A photograph of protestors scaling a wall enclosing the U.S. embassy in Cairo accompanied the story.\(^{716}\) Seventeen pictures of events in Egypt incorporated references to Benghazi. Table 7.2 lists the 16 countries (other than Libya and the United States) pictured in stories mentioning the Benghazi attacks. The large number of articles discussing another country while referencing the Benghazi attacks, as shown by the location images, meant that “Benghazi” functioned as an emblem for any unrest in the Arab or Muslim world.\(^{717}\) The utilization of non-Benghazi photographs to illustrate

\(^{714}\) Rodriguez, “Pakistanis Rally Against Film Mocking Muhammad.”
\(^{715}\) Coker, “Libyans Struggle to Rein in Militias.”
\(^{716}\) Alpert, “More Americans Want to Cut Aid to Egypt After Embassy Attack.”
\(^{717}\) The reference to the Muslim world acknowledges that depicted protests erupted in areas sharing a religion but not an ethnicity, such as Israeli Muslims, Indonesians, Pakistanis, and Afghans.
stories about the attacks resulted from the conflation of the city with the rest of the Muslim world.

Table 7.2 Number of Articles Mentioning Benghazi and a Location Other than Libya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gaza</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of apparent ethnic affinity in the images demonstrated a U.S.-centric bias comparable to the results for location pictures. The number of pictures interpreted as imaging American ethnic affinity dwarfs the tally of Arab ethnic portrayals. Ethnic affinity classified as American (n=368) constituted almost 53% of all images in the dataset and 63% of ethnic affinity photographs. (See Table 7.3). Just as the U.S. location designation almost doubled the combined values for Benghazi and MENA other than Benghazi, the images interpreted as displaying an American ethnic affinity almost doubled the number of images interpreted as featuring an Arab ethnicity (n=198). The ethnic affinity images define the issue as emanating from Americans.

Table 7.3 Relative Frequency of Ethnic Affinity Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
<th>% of ethnic affinity images</th>
<th>% of all images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Western</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The American newspapers used Benghazi images as a denotative symbol for MENA and non-MENA Muslim populations (such as Israel, Nigeria, and Indonesia). The distribution of
pictures in the dataset favored images portraying the United States. The competition between U.S. images and non-U.S. images fabricated a binary: Muslim world against America. Aggregating the entire Arab world under the label “Benghazi” dehumanizes Arabs and Muslims because the process of amalgamation “subjectifies and objectifies all that it sees.”718

The modest population of images in the database picturing damage to property revealed that the violence in Benghazi represented an insignificant element in defining the issue. The distribution of property damage images in relation to all images in the dataset suggests that the rampage in Benghazi did not constitute a significant component of the pictorial narrative. Only 23% (n=153) of images in the database showed destruction of property. 10% of the pictures display active destruction (n=70); 12% indicate completed acts of destruction. The majority of images (n=545) do not show any destruction. (See Table 7.4). The paucity of property damage images allows an inference that the overall problem related to something other than violence in Benghazi, even though the events at the Temporary Mission Facility and CIA Annex resulted in the deaths of four Americans and abandonment of the complex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of Images</th>
<th>% of Destruction Images</th>
<th>% of All Images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destruction in Progress</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction Completed</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Destruction</td>
<td>545</td>
<td></td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The database provided support for the conjecture that American newspapers reacted to the Benghazi attack by condensing the issue into a conflict between the U.S. and the Arab/Muslim world, as demonstrated by the number of images employed. The frame capitalized on an entrenched American bias negatively characterizing Muslims, as demonstrated by previous media studies.719

7.1.2 Issue Diagnosis Category

“Identifying causes” constituted another basic function of news frames.720 Essentially the “causal interpretation function attributes blame for failure or responsibility for success regarding a specific outcome.”721 The number of images portraying people suggested anthropogenic causation. The Benghazi attacks occurred in the context of protests. A video defaming Islam provoked worldwide protests against America. Muslim demonstrators around the world reacted to the television broadcast in September 2012 of a trailer for Nakoula Basseley Nakoula’s film, “The Real Life of Muhammad.” Nakoula originally produced the movie in English without any reference to Islam or Muhammad, but later overdubbed Arabic dialogue transforming the film into a 13-minute attack on the religion. The newspapers studied here reported the ensuing turmoil which included attacks on several U.S. embassies.

The State Department reported that protestors stormed U.S. facilities in Benghazi, a claim they quickly withdrew. On September 15, 2012, Susan Rice, then the American ambassador to the United Nations, appeared on five television news shows where she repeated erroneous information supplied to her by the CIA blaming the

719 Ahmed and Matthes, “Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015,” 222; Poole, Reporting Islam.
attacks on a spontaneous demonstration. Rice’s statements about protestors, authorship of the CIA brief blaming protestors for the attacks, and charges that the Obama administration attempted a deception by focusing on protestors directed a focus of Congressional and media charges against the Obama administration.

Neither the protestor frame nor the victim frame formed a significant part of the Benghazi story as told by the pictures. Analysis of protestor images reinforced that the cause of the deadly Benghazi attacks was domestic. Figure 7.2 charts the importance of several groups contributing to the conclusion that the Benghazi issue did not arise from the attacks.

Only 75 images in the database depicted protestors. The paltry number of protestor images failed to reflect repercussions based on the ubiquity of protesting in the Benghazi attacks narrative. The newspapers’ decision not to portray protestors as the caused the Benghazi problems explains the relatively low number of protest images in the database. Similarly, 28 pictures depicted Stevens and Doherty as the only victims appearing in the database. By contrast, Administration officials, essentially Obama and
Petraeus, constituted 33% of all the pictured groups contributing to a causation frame. Had the Administration group included the State Department, the two combined would have represented 51% of the images in this category. Figure 7.3 compares the number of times pictures of principal actors arose in the dataset. However, segregating State numbers into a separate group highlighted that scrutiny of Clinton and Rice proceeded independent of attacks on the Administration. Further, depictions of Obama and Petraeus occurred almost twice as frequently as pictures of State Department personnel.

![Figure 7.3 Frequency of Individuals Identified in Images](image)

*Figure 7.3 Frequency of Individuals Identified in Images*

The first bar represents the number of pictures. The second shows the percentage of appearances in the causation group. The third charts the percentage of appearances in the dataset.

Scrutiny of data about the individuals pictured in the database revealed that Obama appeared significantly more often than anyone else. Photographs depicting Obama dominated the dataset, indicating an assessment of his culpability for the attacks. Obama images represented 32% of the picture population, 10% higher than the next most common images, members of Congress and Clinton. Moreover, Obama
photographs constituted 14% of the entire collection of images, higher than the number for any other person. The magnitude of Obama pictures use indicated a predilection toward assigning blame to the President.

### 7.1.3 Moral Judgment Category

Frames convey “a moral judgment of those involved in the framed matter.” The importance of moral judgment frame is that “people will perceive attitudes in the moral domain as more universal and objectively true, as authority independent, as more motivating or obligatory, and as resistant to change or social influence.” Four categories impacted the establishment of a moral judgment: Identity of people in pictures, number of people in pictures, camera angle, and destruction.

The insignificant number of images showing victims of the Benghazi attacks indicated a belief that injuries sustained by the victims did not constitute a major component of issues raised by Benghazi. Pictures of victims expressed noble attributes, such as sacrifice or heroism. For example, on September 12, 2012, the *Los Angeles Times* published a picture of Stevens shaking hands with a smiling Libyan. An informally dressed Stevens smiles back. The picture portrays Stevens not as a diplomat but as someone investing time in purposeful activities to aid Libyans. Another side of Stevens emerged from a photo used by the *Wall Street Journal* on September 22, 2012. The ambassador sat among a group of people, dressed as a diplomat, earnestly lecturing the person on his left. Similarly, pictures of Glen Doherty used by the *Los

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725 Entous and Hagey, “Family Protests CNN's Use of Slain Envoy's Journal.”
Angeles Times on September 13, 2012, and the New York Times on September 13, 2012, portrayed him smiling and looking jovial.726

The newspapers de-emphasized the role of the victims by rarely showing attack victims and only once picturing physical injuries. Ambassador Stevens appeared in 21 images, or 3% of all pictures in the database. Portraits constituted the majority (n=11) of pictures showing Stevens. Another nine pictures showed him working with Libyans. A final picture published by the Los Angeles Times on the day after the attacks showed Libyans pulling a barely conscious Stevens, covered in soot, out of the U.S. compound in Benghazi.727 No other picture in the database depicted anyone injured in the attacks.

The remaining deceased victims – Sean Smith with the State Department, and CIA Global Response Staff contract guards Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods – collectively appeared in seven photographs (1% of the database). The newspapers failed to avail themselves of the opportunity to herald the deceased government employees heroically. Instead, the visual record showed that the media minimized their importance to the issues raised by the Benghazi attacks. The media did not publish images of the other Americans injured during the battles.728 As a result, the newspapers’ coverage acknowledged heroic qualities in Stevens while minimizing the importance of victims to the narrative.

726 Perry, “Two Former Navy Seals Among Americans Killed in Libya”; Bidgood, “For Slain Contractor, a Life of Risks Overseas.”
727 Hennessey, “Obama Condemns Libya Attack That Killed U.S. Envoy, 3 Others.” The picture has been removed from the story. Although credited to AFP/Getty Images, the picture does not exist on the Getty Images website. However, it can be found in a slide show at https://www.latimes.com/nation/politics/politicsnow/la-fg-us-ambassador-killed-libya-pictures-20120912-photogallery.html
728 Unclassified versions of the State Department Accountability Review Board reported that two Americans received injuries. US Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, “Benghazi Attack, Part II: The Report of the Accountability Review Board”. On March 15, 2013, the State Department reported that a security officer had been injured at the TMF, plus two others at the Annex. A contractor also suffered injuries. Pecquet, “State: Only Four People Wounded at Benghazi.”
The pictures of Hillary Clinton used by the newspapers equivocated between portraying her as a courageous woman with integrity or a manipulative and deceptive political operative. Newspapers used pictures of Clinton nine times more frequently than pictures of victims. Depictions of Clinton in the database employed a high camera angle looking down on her 12 times, which represented 18% of the Clinton photographs. A high angle looking down typically connotes a lack of power.\(^\text{729}\) By contrast, pictures that communicated Clinton possessed power by employing a low camera angle (looking up at her) appeared 18 times, or 27.7% of photographs with Clinton as the subject. However, the camera looked directly at Clinton in the majority of her pictures (n=35, 53.8%).

Most photographs of Clinton portrayed her as a forceful and influential public figure. For example, the photographs of Clinton taken by AP and Getty Images during her appearance before Congress on January 23, 2013, show her to be animated, assertive and confident. A sequence of four pictures published by the Wall Street Journal showed an animated Clinton using her hands to reach out to inquisitor Senators (and derivatively to the television audience), adjusting her glasses, or supporting her head with her left hand.\(^\text{730}\) All of the pictures communicated that she exercised patience with proceedings that she found exasperating. Similarly, USA Today ran a series of thirteen pictures of Clinton testifying before the same Senate committee.\(^\text{731}\) The pictures depicted Clinton beseeching the Senate panel with hands reaching out to draw them in, raising her right hand as if to indicate the importance of an argument, reaching forward


\(^{730}\) Dorell, “Clinton Defends Actions Before, During Benghazi Attack.”

\(^{731}\) Madhani, “Analysis: Could Clinton’s Benghazi Comments Live On?”
with her left hand, pointing with a finger, and adjusting glasses. In all the pictures her face looks calm.

The series of photographs from the Senate hearing conducted in January of 2013 cast Clinton in a positive fashion while emphasizing that she remained the target of the investigation. The relatively low number of pictures looking up or looking down indicated that the media remained ambiguous towards Clinton. In newspaper reporting, the “the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity.” 732 The pictorial treatment of Clinton’s testimony displayed a technique that used images to indirectly establish a moral attitude about her. Scholars have determined, “Visuals provide a way of articulating ideological messages, allowing news outlets to say things in pictures that would be too controversial to write in words.” 733 Visuals articulated a moral message in the same indirect way. Images offered an approach to indirectly characterize Clinton as a political actor possessing positive moral traits (such as fairness, authority, confidence, and responsibility) without appearing to be biased.

Comparing the number of images showing multiple subjects to the number displaying a single subject supported an interpretation that the media communicated moral issues on behalf of individuals and small groups not diluted by blaming masses of people. 531 of the images pictured under 10 people. In 254 images (36.4% of the entire dataset) only one person appeared, as compared to 277 images (39.7%) showing two to

ten people. Examination of the number of people appearing in photographs emphasized the judgmental assessment that a few people bore responsibility for the problem.

Destruction of property images in the database conveyed moral degradation and deprivation. Schulzke pointed out, “We do not treat the destruction of physical things as being inherently wrong,” postulating the breaking of a fallen stick in a forest as an example of blameless destruction. “The destruction of objects must impose some negative costs on moral agents to warrant censure.” 734 The property shown as destroyed in the pictures displayed a level of damage consistent with deprivation of use of the chattel. Destroyed property appeared in 153 photographs (21.9%). In 70 images (10% of the dataset) the photographs showed destruction taking place. For example, a picture used by the New York Times on October 12, 2012, showed flames erupting in one of the villas inside the Temporary Mission Facility. Similarly, on October 25, 2012, USA Today showed a picture captioned as “a vehicle and the surrounding area are engulfed in flames after it was set on fire inside the U.S. consulate compound in Benghazi.” 735 All four tires on the vehicle burned brightly and foretold its total destruction. The Los Angeles Times on August 6, 2013 published the same photograph. Completed destruction pictures formed 11.9% of the pictures (n=83) in the database. For example, on December 10, 2012, the New York Times published a photo of the car discussed above as on fire, now a scorched wreck. Similarly, the Los Angeles Times ran three pictures on September 12, 2012, documenting interior and exterior devastation at the Benghazi compound. 736 The newspapers in the study portrayed the attack on Benghazi as an immoral attack depriving the United States of the diplomatic compound by

734 Schulzke, Simulating Good and Evil.
735 Sanglin, “Suspect Linked to Benghazi Attack Killed in Cairo.”
inflicting severe damage. The newspapers conveyed a sense that terrorist attacks persisted as an active threat which achieved lasting harm by combining active destruction images with pictures showing the results of the destruction.

Pictures of burning buildings and Libyans apparently celebrating the attack on the Temporary Mission Facility portrayed terrorists as morally corrupt. Fire appeared in 49 images, including 18 that captured images of buildings ablaze in the TMF compound. The remainder depicted burning property in places as diverse as Afghanistan, India, Sudan, New York City, and Indonesia. Twelve pictures captured the image of man apparently celebrating in front of flaming buildings. In the pictures he lifted an automatic weapon with his left hand while raising two fingers of his right hand in a victory gesture or the index finger pointing to heaven as a signal of monotheism. The pictures elicit an emotional response because they encompass the devastation of the building, the danger implied by the automatic weapon, and the elation of the actor. The pictures offered an apparent view of the attack as it progressed, establishing a sense of immediacy. The pictures, however, probably did not show the attack in progress. No evidence suggests that photographers roamed around the diplomatic compound during the firefight taking pictures. Instead, the images seem to show the state of the compound after the terrorists had left and the elements of the 17th of February Martyrs...
Brigade, the local security for the compound, returned. The captions for two of the images disclose that the images reflected conditions after the attack. The *New York Times* on October 18, 2012, stated that the photo represented conditions subsequent to the attack when it described the subject of the photo as “A man near the American Mission in Benghazi, Libya, after the attack last month.” The *New York Times* earlier in October characterized the picture as a “widely published photograph, taken in the aftermath of the attack in Benghazi.” At least one photograph showed the figure with a weapon in one hand while making a victory signal with the other in front of a burning building at a location other than the American compound. *USA Today*, on September 22, 2012, described the scene as “An armed Libyan man flashes the victory sign in front of a fire at the hardline Islamist group Ansar el-Sharia headquarters.”

A group of Libyan protestors, possibly members of the 17th of February Martyrs Brigade, “forced members of a hardline Islamist militia out of their base, setting fire to and wrecking the compound” three days after the attacks on the American compound. The emphasis on pictures of burning buildings and repeated use of images showing an armed, jubilant man in front of the fires highlights moral depravity of the compound attackers.

In addition, burning the American flag, the subject of eleven photographs (all but one from protests in places other than Benghazi) invited intense emotional responses. As an example, on September 13, 2012, the *Wall Street Journal* published a picture of a crowd burning an American flag outside of the United States Embassy in Tunisia. The other flag burning pictures exhibited very little deviations from this image. Flags

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743 Kirkpatrick, “Suspect in Benghazi Attack Scoffs at U.S.”
746 AP.
747 Solomon, “U.S. Policy in Mideast Challenged by Assaults.”
constituted a symbol of American identity such that any damage to the United States flag represented a direct affront to both American individuals and group loyalty. Such emotional shock created a foundation for moral conviction,\textsuperscript{748} as the use of flag burning pictures resonated with deep-seated beliefs in American exceptionalism.

The use of pictures demonstrated an ambiguous moral outlook toward Clinton, as well as minor consideration of roles potentially played by protestors, victims, or the military. Images of destroyed buildings, buildings on fire, and burning flags represented a recurrent effort to establish foreign actors as threatening to Americans. In particular, the treatment of the man celebrating in front of a fire reinforced incumbent attitudes of suffering and attacks on America. The significance of an emotional response leading to moral conviction is that “people will be especially intolerant of those who violate their morally convicted attitudes.”\textsuperscript{749}

\textbf{7.1.4 Remedies Category}

“Endorsing remedies or improvements to the problematic situation” expressed a final basic function of news frames.\textsuperscript{750} The Benghazi pictures database does not contain images suggestive of a remedy. Using Entman’s definition that “remedy ... promotes support of (or opposition to) actual government action,”\textsuperscript{751} the lack of government participation in the visual debate surrounding Benghazi framed the situation as having few, if any, government solutions to the Benghazi attack problem.

\textsuperscript{750} Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 417.
\textsuperscript{751} Entman, 417–18.
Military images, comprising 15.2% of pictures in the dataset, advanced a frame suggesting a martial approach. Ninety-five images showed the military (n=70) or mixed military and civilians (n=25). Military images comprised 10% of the entire database; mixed military and civilian formed 3.6%. Foreign military (n=45) appear in the database almost twice as often as U.S. troops (n=25). Moreover, foreign military photos depict combatants from eight countries. (See Table 7.5) The amalgamation of military pictures forces images from several countries to illustrate Benghazi news articles reinforces the interpretation that media treated foreign countries as interchangeable and homogenous.

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<th>Table 7.5 Military Identified in Photos</th>
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While having been identified as agencies of causation, the military might also function as instrumentalities of abatement. This study previously argued that the military, both foreign and domestic, constituted a cause of the Benghazi crisis. The military images, including pictures showing civilians with military, did not suggest a remedy. Problematically, the concentration of foreign military pictures eschewed the chance to depict the American military as having the capacity to resolve the conflict. The likelihood that the countries listed in Table 7.5 would cooperate with the United States on creating a solution remained small.

Congressional hearings following the Benghazi attacks explored possibilities of the military becoming part of the solution. Congress raised questions about why drones flying above Benghazi during the attacks did not have weapons. The drones functioned as surveillance platforms, although the information they uncovered could not be
communicated to the combatants due to a lack of appropriate equipment. The investigations also explored the failure to dispatch armed aircraft from U.S. bases in Europe, the unavailability of C-130 gunships, and the lack of troops deployable in an emergency. The military addressed each of these deficiencies, particularly by creating a rapidly deployable Marine combat unit dedicated to diplomatic security. While looking to the military for a solution did, in fact, take place, very little substantive discussion appeared in the picture record. A photograph published by USA Today on June 13, 2013, depicted two aircraft explaining, “The U.S. Marines' Osprey tilt-rotor vertical aircraft will be used to fly the rapid reaction force from Spain to trouble spots in Africa.” The paper used the same picture six days later with the caption, “The Spain-based Marine rapid reaction force uses Ospreys.” The Wall Street Journal covered the new formation of a Marine unit by using photographs of an MV-22 Osprey on the ground in Afghanistan and a crouching soldier.

The military worked in conjunction with the CIA but while nominal photographic coverage of the military appeared in the database, no significant pictures depicted the CIA. At most, the papers published pictures of CIA leaders such as CIA Director Petraeus, CIA acting director Morell, and Petraeus’s successor as director, John Brennan. The nineteen pictures of Petraeus portrayed him testifying before Congress about Benghazi, serving as a military officer, and dwelling on his resignation. For example, the Wall Street Journal used the same head shot of Petraeus in full dress uniform to illustrate stories about his testimony before Congress, views linking...
Benghazi attacks to terrorism,756 and the FBI investigation following his resignation.757 The database contained three pictures of Michael Morell.758 All related to appearances before Congress when he served as acting CIA director after the resignation of David Petraeus. The three pictures of John Brennan depicted the announcement of his nomination and the subsequent confirmation hearings.759 The database contained no images of the CIA compound in Benghazi, nor of any CIA facilities anywhere in the world. The CIA as an entity disappeared from the photograph record. No photograph communicated anything of substance about CIA activities.

The number of pictures related to the U.S. Congress or the Executive branch suggested that they might have the capability to render a solution. Members of Congress appeared in 67 images. State Department officials appeared in almost as many (n=65). Many more pictures related to the Executive branch (n=116). Since the State Department formed part of the Administration, combining its numbers with the Executive showed that 26% of all photographs in the dataset depicted some aspect of the Administration. Similarly, adding photographs of American military (n=25) raised the share of the dataset devoted to Administration images to 30%. The large number of images suggested that the Administration possessed great power which might form a basis for crafting a remedy. Unfortunately, secrecy surrounding the Benghazi attacks left this analysis incomplete. Both the State Department and the CIA undertook activities that have not been disclosed to the public. The interpretation presented here applies

756 Gorman and Barrett, “Petraeus Raised Terror Link.”
757 Perez, Barrett, and Campo-Flores, “Obama Undecided on FBI’s Petraeus Probe.”
only to this dataset and the unique historical circumstances of the Benghazi attacks.

7.2 Longitudinal Analysis of Frames

The distribution of images over time illustrated that interest in the Benghazi photos accelerated when stimulated by specific events. The newspapers collectively delivered images in stories that mentioned the Benghazi attacks on slightly less than half (n =180; 49.3%) of the days during the year following the attacks. Figure 7.4 shows that the newspapers published a majority of their Benghazi-related images in the 62 days following the attack. By November 12, 2012, just two months after the attack, half of all images in the dataset appeared in the newspapers. Domestic politics characterized these events. After the initial deluge of pictures in the first two months after the attack, the number of Benghazi pictures used by newspapers acutely declined. The upsurge in published images corresponded to Secretary Clinton’s appearances before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee on January 23, 2012 did not result in even half the number of pictures published immediately after the attack.

![Figure 7.4 Distribution of Images Over Time](image-url)
The frames advanced by the newspapers evolved over time. All the picture spikes after coverage of the initial attack resulted from domestic political events, such as the vice-presidential candidate debate on October 11, 2012 or the release of an unclassified version of the State Department Accountability Review Board report on December 19, 2012. The framing started to minimize Benghazi as an attack on U.S. diplomatic facilities in favor of visuals using Benghazi as a symbol for violent activities in other countries while simultaneously developing domestic political frames. For example, the peak for February 1, 2013, occurred as a result of three events that the media compared to Benghazi: the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Turkey, the kidnapping of natural gas plant workers in Algeria, and Hillary Clinton’s final day as Secretary of State. Ecevit Şanlı, a Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party Front suicide bomber, attacked the U.S. Embassy in Ankara on February 1, 2013. The assault injured four security guards, including one fatally. A dubious linkage connected the Benghazi attacks and the Ankara bombing: both involved diplomatic facilities. The invocation of Benghazi as an exemplar for terror attacks on Americans in foreign countries resulted in the use of pictures unconnected to the Benghazi attacks. For example, on February 2, 2013, The Wall Street Journal published a 25-paragraph article reporting the blast in Turkey. A two-sentence paragraph cited the Benghazi attacks to provide context for the terror strike in Ankara. The media published five pictures on February 1 and 2 illustrating the embassy bombing in Turkey and its aftermath. The New York Times used four images illustrating the hostage crisis in Algeria on February 1, 2013. An attack on the

760 Iyigun and Tattersall, “Turkey Says Tests Confirm Leftist Bombed U.S. Embassy.”
Tigantourine natural gas processing plant by 32 terrorists linked to al-Qaeda on January 16, 2013, resulted in the capture of more than 800 workers and foreigners. Algerian forces failed to rescue hostage in a raid on January 17. A final assault on January 19 resulted in the deaths of 29 terrorists as well as 39 hostages, and freed 792 hostages. Only the Times compared the Algerian crisis with Benghazi, resulting in the inclusion of Algerian pictures in the database. The newspapers diluted the emotive potential of Benghazi images by associating the attacks there with unconnected terror strikes.

Similarly, image framing based on media coverage of Secretary Clinton’s last day at the State Department further attenuated the horror of Benghazi. The newspapers used seven photographs documenting multiple farewell speeches to groups of State Department employees on February 1, 2013. None of the pictures showed Benghazi, although stories summarizing her career and legacy as Secretary of State recounted the attacks.

The distribution of images across the year studied here reaffirms the conclusion that, at least in pictures, the Benghazi attacks became increasingly inconsequential with separation from the date of the attack. The database not only contained an insignificant number of photos of American victims, but the newspapers used American victim pictures only twice after 62 days of the attack. Images of Glen Doherty appeared twice within days of the attack but not thereafter. Nineteen images of Ambassador Stevens circulated in the newspapers before November 12, 2012. His image appeared twice in the following 303 days of this study. The last image of Ambassador Stevens in the database appeared in the New York Times on August 6, 2013.762 No picture of Stevens

can be found between January 23, 2013 and August 6. After a profusion of images published within sixty days of the attacks, the number of pictures related to Benghazi dropped abruptly.

November 12, 2012 constituted a demarcation distinguishing the newspapers’ transition to picturing Benghazi mainly as a political situation. Half of all images in the database appeared before November 12, 2012. Table 6.6 displays the number of images published on each day during the study year. After November 12, 2012, the newspapers used 23 pictures showing Benghazi (18 images related to the attacks) and 81 pictures from foreign locations other than Benghazi. The remaining 245 images used in the 303 days after November 12, 2012 showed scenes in the United States, principally political activities. The database contained 98 images of Benghazi in total. Only 23% of the Benghazi images made an appearance in the 62 days after the attacks.

Although visual frames existed in the Benghazi visual narrative, they did not function as predicted by Cascading Activation Models. News agencies constructed the frames as they supplied the bulk of images to the newspapers. Media published the frames, as predicted, but the frames did not noticeably travel up or done the cascade. Nothing in the database suggested that political actors attempted to advance visual counterframes. If anything, elites of both parties ignored visual communication opportunities. Cursory reference to the existence of images as framing contrivances by scholars studying Cascading Activation suggested the primary inquiry driving this investigation: Did visual frames function in the cascade consonantly with textual frames? They did not.
Table 7.6 Dates and Number of Images Published

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<td>3</td>
<td>2/21/2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6/4/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/18/2012</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11/30/2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3/3/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6/9/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/19/2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12/4/2012</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3/5/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6/11/2013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Cascading Activation: Confronting a Fractured Paradigm

The Cascading Activation Models experienced major modifications before the functional abandonment of “cascade” as a metaphor in 2018. Robert Entman proposed the Cascading Activation Model in 2004 to remedy deficiencies he identified in predominant theories appraising the relationship between government and media in the formation of foreign policy. The cascade metaphor activated a mental picture of ideas tumbling down a series of components representing oppositional elites, Congress, the media, and the public. The cascade allegory, however, insufficiently characterized the formation of foreign policy in the real world for two reasons.

First, discussions concerning foreign policy typically arose in a dialectical, discursive context. Although the President could originate a foreign policy proposal consistent with the assumptions of the Cascading Activation Models, a policy program often coalesced after a recursive process involving members of the administration, elites, Congress, media, and citizens before the executive branch announced it. Once announced, the model approximated the modeled flow. Entman resolved the sequence problem by proposing an upwards recursion of the flow. He surmised that, “[a]s is true of actual waterfalls also, moving downward in a cascade is relatively easy, but spreading ideas higher, from lower levels to upper, requires extra energy—a pumping mechanism, so to speak.” A pumping mechanism, however, undermined the concept of information flow as a cascade.

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763 Entman, “Cascading Activation”; Entman, Projections of Power.
Second, Cascading Activation diverged again from reality in its embrace of hierarchical sequence. The models presumed a static view of political actors’ roles positioned on the cascade that corresponded to the power that each wielded. The functioning foreign policy complex in the United States, however, constantly mutated. For example, at times, the media raised issues that eventually drove policy considerations. The CNN Effect hypothesis argued that media coverage of events propelled issues to recognition by national policy and political leaders. Controversial issues such as torture at Abu Ghraib prison or the killing of civilians at Fallujah became foreign policy topics after media exposure without any introduction from the President and his team. Various scholars argue that the “U.S. responded to the crises in northern Iraq following the Persian Gulf War, Somalia in 1992, Rwanda in 1994, Bosnia in 1995, and Kosovo in 1999, among others, not because of clearly defined national priorities established through deliberative institutional processes but because of the emotionally compelling pull of television pictures.” The existence of policy issues brought into policy debate by media outlets undermined the formative assumptions of hierarchy present in Entman’s models.

The study of images related to the Benghazi attacks presented here found no evidence of either sequential or hierarchical cascades. “Sequence” describes an orderly interaction between participants in foreign policy formation. “Hierarchy” represents the distribution of power among actors in the sequence. The vast majority of images entered the debate after press agencies supplied them and the media published them.

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768 Entman, “Cascading Activation,” 420.
Press agencies did not appear in the theoretical description of the cascades when Entman formulated the models. The placement of media in the middle of the cascade, almost as a buffer between government and the people, meant that the use of images in the Benghazi story did not follow a pattern of flowing from one level to the next based on a provocation of responses. Further, no evidence supported the prediction by the theory that the top of the cascade would wield greatest power in formulating policy. Only a single image – the FBI poster seeking information on suspects – unequivocally came from the administration. That single image appeared one time, in one newspaper, and did not innervate responsive images from elites or the public. Contrary to a core assumption of cascade models, press agencies and the media wielded much more power than the administration or oppositional elites in the instance of Benghazi images. Finally, the media’s introduction of images did not result in the release of counterframing images, as predicted by the cascade models. In short, the Benghazi images database did not exhibit either a sequential interaction between actors or any distribution of power.
8.2 Alternative Flow Models

8.2.1 Flow Model Based on Benghazi Images Database

A flow diagram for images that recognizes the role of press agencies in establishing visual frames as well as the behavior of media in distributing images based on the Benghazi attacks database appears as Figure 8.1. The model not only includes a major role for press agencies in creating image frames, but also acknowledges that the media produced images of its own. The media circulated images to the administration, other elites, and the public. The proposed images model differs from the Cascading Activation models by theorizing a circumscribed hierarchy with press agencies at the top and the public, other elites, and the Administration occupying the bottom as equals.

![Images Cascade Model Based on Flow in the Benghazi Database](image)

*Figure 8.1 Images Cascade Model Based on Flow in the Benghazi Database*
This study found no evidence that the bottom tier processed images other than as receivers of the frames introduced by the press agencies and media outlets. The Images Cascade Model illustrates the actual flow found in this study. All images flowed down from Media-Press Agencies while nothing flowed back up or between the bottom levels.

The absence of a reverse information flow represents another significant departure from the Cascading Activation model. Framing words and images in the Cascading Activation models flow down to the public, which may transmit information back up to the media, and up to other elites. The proposed model separates text flow from image flow. The separation reflects the intent of this study to better understand the manner framing images perform in a foreign policy debate. The question of the framing process arose from the almost universal linkage of texts and images in the Cascading Activation Models. The disinclination to study images in the models limits their usefulness for interrogating visual communication in the framing context.

No flow reversal exists for images in the proposed model. This study does not show any interaction between cascade levels that might motivate an image frame contestation. Instead, the proposed model highlights exactly the limited flow of images present in this study. Unique circumstances surrounding the Benghazi attacks issues possibly interfered with the flow. For example, the attacks took place during a presidential election in the United States. In such a context, the U.S. Congress and the administration, at a minimum, would tend to avoid a battle of images that might distract potential voters from campaign issues. In addition, the administration would not want to draw attention to images on an issue where their actions could appear unfavorably to potential voter.

An analogous situation might be the flood of images attendant to the insurgency
following the fall of the governing Iraqi regime. Perlmutter explains, “The Department of Defense was essentially left with no counter-images to provide against the relentless scenes of burning American vehicles and smoking Iraqi buildings.” Similarly, no known positive counter-images exist in the Benghazi case. The preponderance of images available to the administration depicted the attack at the Temporary Mission Facility and the destruction afterwards. None of these images challenged the visible narrative that the media portrayed.

8.2.2 Restructuring the Cascade Activation Models

The cascade metaphor performs better if the flow focuses on information movement rather than relative power positions of the various actors that the model encompasses. The cascade metaphor used in CAM/CNAM and the model expressed in Figure 8.1 emphasizes relative power among actors in foreign policy formation. An alternative model that replaces assumptions about power with a description of image circulation would not need counterintuitive “flowing up” exceptions to account for all flows. The model proposed in Figure 8.2 emphasizes actual information flow, rather than power, by removing the entities involved in the process. The actions that various actors instigate take precedence over their identity. Instead of installing the administration and its minions at the top of the flow, the new model recognizes that any entity can propound foreign policy initiatives. A new fluid arrangement resolves a problem with the Cascading Activation Models that when any level other than the

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769 Perlmutter, “Photojournalism and Foreign Affairs,” 111.
Administration generates a proposal the model abandons the cascade metaphor.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 8.2 Information Based Cascade Activation*

The dynamism of the model allows for complete description of the flow of frames in formation. The Promoter, occupying the gateway at the top of the cascade, advances the proposition that forms the issue. The Promoter can be any entity, not just the administration. This revised model significantly differs from the Cascading Activation Models by acknowledging that any entity can submit a proposal. By recognizing that proposals can originate with any actor the new model can accommodate issues like the CNN effect or Congressional initiatives. Appositional actors bring together entities who favor the new policy. Oppositional actors similarly recruit support, but to critique (or ultimately defeat) the proposed measure. Neutral actors neither support nor oppose the proposal. Undecided voters or elites not wishing to take sides for political reasons can still participate at this level. Neutrals may, over time, migrate to appositional or oppositional status, or they may simply cease to participate in the formation of the policy under consideration. Distributors form an essential part of the flow, although they may not necessarily participate in policy framing. Media, talk shows, chat groups,
and the like facilitate the conversation by assuming the role of distributors. Entities can also occupy more than a single level depending on the functions they perform. Media, for example, can function simultaneously as a promoter and as a distributor. The new model places a premium on function rather than position of agency.

The flexibility of the new model provides for inclusion of non-obvious actors, such as lobbyists and interest groups, as potential promoters of policy. Scholars can introduce additional actors emergent in the research process to take full account of on-the-ground circumstances. Table 8.1 lists actors potentially participating in the model. The list can be expanded by adding relevant entities as they participate in the discourse.

**Table 8.1 Potential Actors in the Information-Based Flow Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Press Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White House</td>
<td>Mainstream Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Departments</td>
<td>Lobbyists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies</td>
<td>Satirists, Comedians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Agencies</td>
<td>Bloggers, influencers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Congress</td>
<td>Interest Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Members of Congress</td>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Federal Government Officials</td>
<td>Other Elites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judiciary</td>
<td>Issue Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Unions</td>
<td>Academics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The model positions mainstream media as the sole receiver of press agency information. Press agencies function as an entity important to policy debate but not directly involved in it. Formulating the press agency-mainstream media nexus as a single unit in situations where the agencies supply significant material to the media recognizes the importance of the agencies and emphasizes its position as an actor with a single consumer. Not all listed actors in Table 8.1 need be assigned a place in the flow model because some will not exhibit an interest in every topic. The model allows specific identification of actors as necessary. For example, the White House or the Defense
Department should be listed instead of “Administration” when circumstances make them appear as separate actors. In the Benghazi attacks, the State Department and the CIA would be specifically named because of the major roles that each played. The assignment of actors to any of the three levels does not proceed arbitrarily or prior to consideration of a policy. The actors consciously or unconsciously assign themselves to a level through their actions. The model assumes the availability of symmetric communication paths between actors, although one level may refuse to communicate with another for political, ideological, or tactical reasons. The lines in the model describe potential information pathways. Not all pathways activate in some situations. For example, using the Information Based Flow Model to interrogate the Benghazi images database would result in the flow map shown as Figure 8.3.

The new model suggested here accurately portrays the communication flow that occurred in the case of the Benghazi attack images. Mainstream media, including associated press agencies, function created visual frames. The images reached potential appositional and potential oppositional actors, such as the White House, State Department, Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, currently serving and former Democratic and Republican members of the U.S. Congress, Republican and Democratic elites, and bloggers. The model displays an absence of appositional and oppositional actors because no entity reacted to the release of images. All actors remained neutral in terms of a visual debate, although they fiercely engaged in political rhetoric. Since no evidence had been found that images in the database circulated after release by the media, no entity acted as a distributor. The media served as its own
distributor. No flows existed after the media produced the images. They did not stimulate a response featured in an appositional-oppositional dialogue.

In the unique case of Benghazi images where no counterframing or other reaction followed the release of pictures, the Information-Based Flow Activation Model mirrors the flow demonstrated in Figure 8.1. Unsurprisingly, both illustrate the absence of discourse as no entity reacted to the release of images. The first proposed model adequately describes the flow leading to frame formation in the case of Benghazi but has little relevance to any conflict exhibiting characteristics different than in

![Diagram of Information-Based Flow Activation Model Applied to Benghazi Images Database](image)

**Figure 8.3 Information-Based Flow Activation Model Applied to Benghazi Images Database**

### 8.3 The Benghazi Secret

This study documents the existence of a secret pertaining to the CIA presence in Benghazi but, unfortunately, could not unravel it. The Obama administration never provided an explanation for a large CIA compound in the city. The CIA warned members of Congress during a trip to Benghazi immediately after the attacks that they should not
speak of its presence. Congressman Chaffetz recalled, “I was told specifically while I was in Libya I could not and should not ever talk about what you are showing here today.”770 Congressman Kross reprimanded a witness for bringing “a photograph of the secret compound.”771

The Benghazi episode includes numerous indicia of secrecy. General Carter Ham, who as commander of the United States Africa Command that bore responsibility for securing U.S. assets in the continent, did not know about the CIA facility in Benghazi until he was called upon to rescue it.772 Libyan government officials found out about the CIA facility only during its evacuation.773 The CIA Director did not attend the dignified transfer of remains ceremony that repatriated two agency employees, “to conceal the agency’s role.”774 Similarly, the New York Times agreed to an Obama Administration request asking it to withhold information about the attack that “could jeopardize sensitive government activities.”775 The State Department Accountability Review Board report exists in two versions. The unclassified variant never mentions the CIA.

The nature of the secret remains unknown. One possibility is that the CIA undertook a massive operation to recover weapons that militia groups looted from Libyan armories after the collapse of the Gaddafi government. Glen Doherty, a CIA GRS employee, told his family before deployment that he had been hired to “round up dangerous heavy weapons.”776 His job as member of the Global Response Staff, however, did not involve capturing weapons. GRS provided security to agents genuinely collecting

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771 Schmitt, Cooper, and Schmidt, “Deadly Attack in Libya Was Major Blow to C.I.A. Efforts.”
772 Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya.”
773 Schmitt, Cooper, and Schmidt, “Deadly Attack in Libya Was Major Blow to C.I.A. Efforts.”
774 Ferran, “CIA to Pay Benghazi Contractor Glen Doherty’s Family $400K.”
weapons. Another possibility suggests that the CIA had been operating in Libya illegally. President Obama signed a Presidential order authorizing the CIA to operate in Libya in March 2011. The CIA may have operated in the country before the signing of the Presidential Finding. For example, newspapers reported that CIA secretly entered Libya to provide targeting information for air strikes. Finally, the CIA might have also been smuggling weapons into Libya during the Libyan civil war despite administration denials that the U.S. supplied the rebels and a UN ban on sending weapons to Libya.

Whatever the secret, it profoundly affected American policy. Secretary Clinton accepted responsibility for the lack of security that permitted the attacks. As previously argued, substantial evidence suggested that the CIA had agreed to provide security in Benghazi. Clinton could not make that argument, however, without disclosing the nature of CIA activities in Libya. As a result, Clinton suffered through years of Congressional investigations which may have contributed to her loss in the 2016 Presidential elections.

Secrecy also affected the pictorial record related to the Benghazi attack. No photographs of the CIA Annex have ever been published. Even though tight security at the Annex included surveillance cameras, none of their video or pictures made it to the public record. Nonetheless, DOD officials admitted to monitoring the attacks “in almost real time” from Washington due to camera coverage. The absence of CIA pictures from the photographic record skews the analysis of visual frames in this study.

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778 Hosenball.
780 Schachtman and Beckhusen, “State Department: We Monitored Libya Attack ‘in Almost Real Time.’”
As argued in this dissertation, the CIA emerged as the culpable entity for activities leading to the attacks, security failures, and misinformation. The CIA established an operating base in Benghazi before the State Department arrived.\textsuperscript{781} The State Department believed that the CIA would provide security for both compounds pursuant to a secret agreement.\textsuperscript{782} In fact, the CIA rushed its QRS contingent to the TMF to challenge the attackers, then abandoned TMF, and transporting everyone to the Annex. Stevens operated out of the CIA Annex from June 21, 2011 until the TMF opened sometime after August 3, 2011.\textsuperscript{783} Stevens had turned down offers to provision the TMF with Marine guards and an AFRICOM six-member Site Security Team before he returned to Benghazi as ambassador.\textsuperscript{784} Whether Stevens turned down ordinary security for the TMF because of a security arrangement with the CIA may never be known.

The CIA's persistent refusal to declassify images of the TMF attack comports with efforts to keep its involvement a secret. The absence of photo records documenting CIA involvement results in a significant impediment in the analysis of frames used to identify, diagnose, and remedy issues as well as to make moral judgments. The absence of CIA photographs available to the media skewed pictorial arguments toward framing actors like the White House and the State Department for the tragedy, while leaving the CIA untouched. The image record studied here does not accurately reflect the full range of real events because of the absence of CIA material. The Benghazi images database does, however, accurately reflect the conversation between the newspapers and its

\textsuperscript{781} Hauben, “The Benghazi Affair: Uncovering the Mystery of the Benghazi CIA Annex.”
\textsuperscript{782} Entous et al., “CIA Takes Heat for Role in Libya.”
audiences. This study proposed to engage the process of foreign policy frame formation using images in the scheme established by the Cascading Activation Models. The absence of images depicting the CIA does not undermine analysis of frames in this study because the database defined the actual state of the public debate.

### 8.4 Areas for Further Research

The unique circumstances surrounding coverage of the Benghazi attacks may limit the application of this study to other cases. In addition to restrictions imposed to assure secrecy, the immediacy of a U.S. presidential election, the participation in events by the leading Democratic candidate for the following election, and the initiation of the historically longest Congressional investigation constitute a confluence of circumstances that rarely exist together. The Abu Ghraib controversy, for example, began with the release of photographs documenting the use of torture by American military police.\(^{785}\) The visual torture frame did not prompt a visual framing response.\(^ {786}\) Understanding the level of generalizability that these findings have for other settings and any constraints on when they might be applicable elsewhere should thus be a priority for scholars interested in use of cascade in the visual realm.

Future research should also explore whether visual framing in foreign policy formation induces visual counterframing. No entity proposed counterframes in the Benghazi episode. Discovering the extent to which images circulated in other foreign policy experiences may demonstrate that framing images do not circulate analogously to framing text. Controversies such as Abu Ghraib, Fallujah, and murders in the Maywand District of Afghanistan attracted attention because of abhorrent images, but the images

\(^{785}\) Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, “None Dare Call It Torture,” 471.

\(^{786}\) Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston, “None Dare Call It Torture.”
did not widely circulate or provoke distribution of counter-images. All of these examples raise the question whether the difference in image circulation correlates to a perception that Americans functioned as targets rather than perpetrators. If that hypothesis proves to be correct, then the models studied in this dissertation may need to be revised to account for perception bias.

In addition to examining cases with no significant circulation of images, the models suggested here should be tested with issues showing more robust image circulation and counterframing. Examples might be found in political campaigns and social issue protests. If images do not circulate through the cascade or information flow, then the current belief that images and text work together to establish frames might need to be discarded. Since images work differently than text in conveying information, image and image frames may also work in unique ways. For example, a casual look at image use in news raises questions about whether the employment of images in modern praxis simply validates textual frames or operates as evidence supporting a counterframe. In either case no image-based discourse using only pictures arises.

The movement of photo subjects away from those located in foreign lands towards concentration on actors in the United States should be studied over a longer term, especially because of the persistence of Benghazi as an issue. The time frame studied here ended in 2013. A longer study might disclose more information about the process of frame movement through the cascade. Benghazi remains a political issue ten years after the attacks, and yet, no studies examine the evolution of Benghazi-based picture in the more recent period. The trend away from picturing the consequences of the attacks and towards use of domestic U.S. political images found in this study may have accelerated over time. A follow-up study might show a migration of picture
subjects as well as discover any new image frames advanced since completion of this study.

Searching for a change in Benghazi image use over the last ten years would complement a study of the evolution of “Benghazi” as a polysemic political term. My suggestion that Benghazi now functions as a surrogate for any terror attack or for a perceived cover-up could be the basis for a lengthy research program describing the phenomenon. In particular, the extent to which the Benghazi affair altered political communication should be more carefully studied. “Benghazi” now constitutes an empty signifier with highly variable meaning that may also diverge with context. 787 Users of the word may signify concepts as varied as long Congressional hearings, the use of Congressional resources, a political cover-up, a spurious charge of a political cover-up and the like. Even more than the semiotic transformation of “Benghazi,” the term acquired usage in political communication to denote a presumed cover-up or conspiracy. Just as “-gate” came to “suggest unethical behavior and cover-up,” 788 the Benghazi term has served as a lens for criticizing problems as varied as a stalled train, 789 vaccination mandates, 790 gay liberation, 791 and July 4th fireworks in Erie, Pennsylvania. 792

The finding here that pictures in the foreign policy debate following the Benghazi attacks did not circulate as predicted by the Cascading Activation Models reveals the potential for future research that extends beyond flow models. Flow models do not

787 Oxford Reference, “Empty Signifier.” An empty signifier “may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean.”
789 MacGillis, “This Is What Life in a Plutocracy Looks Like.”
790 Deto, “Wendy Bell Compares Those Against Gov. Wolf’s Coronavirus Orders to People Killed in Benghazi Attacks.”
791 Frum, “Don’t Blame Gay Men for Benghazi.”
encapsulate the dynamism driving foreign policy formation. For example, both the Cascading Activation Models and the Information-Based Model in Figure 8.3 treat categories such as “Administration” as monolithic. The Benghazi data presented in this dissertation show this assumption to be false. For example, Michael Morrell at CIA urged that attack images be released to the public but the White House rejected the suggestion. Although the Information-Based Model permits multiple agents to inhabit different levels, debate within the levels cannot be modeled. Further research may illuminate the degree of cohesion within the groups analyzed by the models. The analysis in this study depicts the process of policy formation evidenced by images as straightforward. Internal debate at each group may have resulted in conscious decisions to not participate in image discourse.

Finally, an attempt to apply Complex Systems Theory to the role of images in policy debates may form an avenue for future exploration. Complexity theory examines change and heterogeneity within a system to understand how an organization functions. The actors studied here constitute a heterogeneous set. The analysis over time in this study demonstrated change. The system of foreign policy formation using images may be treated as a complex adaptive system consisting of heterogeneous actors making decisions that evolve over time, that interact, and the interaction produces policy.

793 Cameron and Larsen-Freeman, “Complex Systems and Applied Linguistics.”
794 Sullivan, “Embracing Complexity.”
APPENDIX

Benghazi Database Coding Manual

BENGHAZI DATABASE CODING MANUAL

GUIDELINES

* Remember that you may consider the headline, the caption, the source, the author, and the date when coding. You will be able to code most images, however, just by looking at the image and the caption.

*None of the images are locked. You may expand them if that helps. If you expand them then you should reduce them to a size that sits in the cell when you have finished examining the image. You may also change the physical size of cells if that aids you. Just be sure that all the data is kept together.

*Each image is accompanied by a URL (located in column AD). You may go to the original photo if necessary but you should not read the article to help code. If you need to go the original article then you should make a note of it and report that to me when you are finished.

*It does not matter whether the image is a picture, cartoon, graphic, or videolink. All are treated as images.

*Use row number to identify images in communications. All images are in column A.

*Do not be afraid of making a mistake. You are not being tested. Coding is a technique to transform an image into data that can be studied using statistical methods. You will be asked to review portions of your work later if necessary to assure accuracy.

*You may print out this guide if you would find it helpful.

*Column AE ("Notes") is for your use. You can use it mark items you want to review a second time, record questions, or anything else.
1. **When you look at the picture are you:**
   1. Looking up
   2. Looking down
   3. Neither looking nor down

Looking up
Looking up does not mean that the subject of the picture is looking up. It means that if you were present at the time the picture was taken then you would have to be looking up to get this perspective. Another way to think of it is that the camera angled upward to take the picture. These images would be coded as 1.

Looking down
Looking down does not mean that the subject of the picture is looking down. It means that if you were present at the time the picture was taken then you would have to be looking down to get this perspective. Another way to think of it is that the camera angled downward to take the picture. These images would be coded as 2.

Neutral
Neutral does not mean that the subject of the picture is neither looking up nor looking down. It means that if you were present at the time the picture was taken then you would not be looking up or down. Another way to think of it is that the camera was level to take the picture. These images would be coded as 3.
2. Who is in the picture?
   1. Hillary Clinton
   2. Barack Obama
   3. Susan Rice
   4. David Petraeus
   5. Christopher Stevens
   6. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton
   7. Barack Obama and Susan Rice
   8. Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice
   9. Other American victims of the Benghazi attack (Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods)
   10. Members of the United States Congress
   11. Other people that can be considered victims
   0. No one in picture or cannot identify

1. Hillary Clinton

2. Barack Obama

3. Susan Rice

4. David Petraeus
5. Christopher Stevens

6. Other American victims of the Benghazi attack (Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods):

7. Members of the United States Congress
Here are examples of types of pictures that show Members of Congress:

3. What do you believe to be the ethnic make-up of subjects in the picture.
   1. American
   2. Western but not American
   3. Arab
   4. Other

Here are examples of pictures that can be interpreted as typically American. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 1.
Here are examples of pictures that can be interpreted as typically Western. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 2.

Here are examples of pictures that can be interpreted as typically Arab. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 3.

Here are examples of pictures where you might have a problem deciding ethnicity. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 4.

4. How many people are in the image?
   1. One
   2. Two to ten.
   4. There are no people in the image.

Here are examples of pictures with one person. These images would be coded as 1.
Here are examples of pictures with more than one person but less than ten. These images would be coded as 2.

Here are examples of pictures with more than ten people. These images would be coded as 3.

Here are examples of pictures with no people. These images would be coded as 4.

5. Are there weapons in the picture?
   1. Yes
   2. No

Here are examples of pictures with weapons. These images would be coded as 1.
Here pictures with no weapons. These images would be coded as 2.

![Image 1](image1.png) ![Image 2](image2.png) ![Image 3](image3.png) ![Image 4](image4.png)

6. Does the picture show destruction?
   1. Yes, active destruction taking place
   2. Yes, results of destruction having taken place
   3. No

Here are pictures showing destruction in process. These images would be coded as 1.

![Image 5](image5.png) ![Image 6](image6.png) ![Image 7](image7.png) ![Image 8](image8.png)

Here are examples of pictures showing the aftermath of a destructive episode. These images would be coded as 2.

![Image 9](image9.png) ![Image 10](image10.png) ![Image 11](image11.png) ![Image 12](image12.png)

7. Does the picture show protestors?
   1. Yes
   2. No

Here are images showing protestors. These images would be coded as 1.

![Image 13](image13.png) ![Image 14](image14.png) ![Image 15](image15.png) ![Image 16](image16.png)
Here are images that do not show protestors. These images would be coded as 2.

7. The central location of the picture is
   1. Benghazi
   2. Somewhere in a Middle Eastern or North African country but not necessarily Benghazi
   3. The United States.
   5. Impossible to determine.

Here are pictures showing the diplomatic mission in Benghazi. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 1.

Here are pictures that show a scene in the Middle East or North Africa. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 2.
Here are pictures that show a scene in the United States. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 3.

Here are pictures that show scenes that are neither in the United States, North Africa, nor the Middle East. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 4.

Here are pictures where the central location is impossible to determine. Remember that you may consider the caption in making an assessment. These images would be coded as 5.

8. This picture shows:
   1. Civilians
   2. Military
   4. Neither military nor civilian.

Here are examples of pictures of civilians. These images would be coded as 1.
Here are examples of pictures of military. These images would be coded as 2.

Here are examples of mixed civilians and military in pictures. These images would be coded as 3.

Here are examples of pictures that are neither military nor civilian. These images would be coded as 4.
REFERENCES

“Presidential Approval and Reporting of Covert Actions,” 1947.


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