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Statement on the Death of American Personnel in Benghazi, Libya

Press Statement

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State

Washington, DC

September 12, 2012

It is with profound sadness that I share the news of the death of four American personnel in Benghazi, Libya yesterday. Among them were United States Ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and Foreign Service Information Management Officer, Sean Smith. We are still making next of kin notifications for the other two individuals. Our hearts go out to all their families and colleagues.

A 21 year veteran of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Stevens died last night from injuries he sustained in the attack on our office in Benghazi.

I had the privilege of swearing in Chris for his post in Libya only a few months ago. He spoke eloquently about his passion for service, for diplomacy and for the Libyan people. This assignment was only the latest in his more than two decades of dedication to advancing closer ties with the people of the Middle East and North Africa which began as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. As the conflict in Libya unfolded, Chris was one of the first Americans on the ground in Benghazi. He risked his own life to lend the Libyan people a helping hand to build the foundation for a new, free nation. He spent every day since helping to finish the work that he started. Chris was committed to advancing America's values and interests, even when that meant putting himself in danger.

Sean Smith was a husband and a father of two, who joined the Department ten years ago. Like Chris, Sean was one of our best. Prior to arriving in Benghazi, he served in Baghdad, Pretoria, Montreal, and most recently The Hague.

All the Americans we lost in yesterday's attacks made the ultimate sacrifice. We condemn this vicious and violent attack that took their lives, which they had committed to helping the Libyan people reach for a better future.

America's diplomats and development experts stand on the front lines every day for our country. We are honored by the service of each and every one of them.

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