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Remarks at the Transfer of Remains Ceremony to Honor Those Lost in Attacks in Benghazi, Libya

Remarks

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary of State

Andrews Air Force Base

Joint Base Andrews, MD

September 14, 2012

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Chaplain. Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Secretary Panetta, Ambassador Rice, Secretary Powell and Mrs. Powell, family members of the four patriots and heroes we bring home, members of the State Department family, ladies and gentlemen, today we bring home four Americans who gave their lives for our country and our values. To the families of our fallen colleagues, I offer our most heartfelt condolences and deepest gratitude.

Sean Smith joined the State Department after six years in the Air Force. He was respected as an expert on technology by colleagues in Pretoria, Baghdad, Montreal, and The Hague. He enrolled in correspondence courses at Penn State and had high hopes for the future. Sean leaves behind a loving wife Heather, two young children, Samantha and Nathan, and scores of grieving family, friends, and colleagues. And that's just in this world. Because online in the virtual worlds that Sean helped create, he is also being mourned by countless competitors, collaborators, and gamers who shared his passion.

Tyrone Woods, known to most as Rone, spent two decades as a Navy SEAL, serving multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010, he protected American diplomatic personnel in dangerous posts from Central America to the Middle East. He had the hands of a healer as well as the arms of a warrior, earning distinction as a registered nurse and certified paramedic. Our hearts go out to Tyrone's wife Dorothy, and his three sons Tyrone, Jr., Hunter, and Kai, born just a few months ago, along with his grieving family, friends, and colleagues.

Glen Doherty, who went by Bub, was also a former SEAL and an experienced paramedic. He too died as he lived, serving his country and protecting his colleagues. Glen deployed to some of the most dangerous places on Earth, including Iraq and Afghanistan, always putting his life on the line to safeguard other Americans. Our thoughts and prayers are with Glen's father Bernard, his mother Barbara, his brother Gregory, his sister Kathleen, and their grieving families, friends, and colleagues.

I was honored to know Ambassador Chris Stevens. I want to thank his parents and siblings, who are here today, for sharing Chris with us and with our country. What a wonderful gift you gave us. Over his distinguished career in the Foreign Service, Chris won friends for the United States in far-flung places. He made those people's hopes his own. During the revolution in Libya, he

risked his life to help protect the Libyan people from a tyrant, and he gave his life helping them build a better country.

People loved to work with Chris. And as he rose through the ranks, they loved to work for Chris. He was known not only for his courage but for his smile – goofy but contagious – for his sense of fun and that California cool.

In the days since the attack, so many Libyans – including the Ambassador from Libya to the United States, who is with us today – have expressed their sorrow and solidarity. One young woman, her head covered and her eyes haunted with sadness, held up a handwritten sign that said “Thugs and killers don’t represent Benghazi nor Islam.” The President of the Palestinian Authority, who worked closely with Chris when he served in Jerusalem, sent me a letter remembering his energy and integrity, and deploring – and I quote – “an act of ugly terror.” Many others from across the Middle East and North Africa have offered similar sentiments.

This has been a difficult week for the State Department and for our country. We’ve seen the heavy assault on our post in Benghazi that took the lives of those brave men. We’ve seen rage and violence directed at American embassies over an awful internet video that we had nothing to do with. It is hard for the American people to make sense of that because it is senseless, and it is totally unacceptable.

The people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Tunisia did not trade the tyranny of a dictator for the tyranny of a mob. Reasonable people and responsible leaders in these countries need to do everything they can to restore security and hold accountable those behind these violent acts. And we will, under the President’s leadership, keep taking steps to protect our personnel around the world.

There will be more difficult days ahead, but it is important that we don’t lose sight of the fundamental fact that America must keep leading the world. We owe it to those four men to continue the long, hard work of diplomacy. I am enormously proud of the men and women of the State Department. I’m proud of all those across our government, civilian and military alike, who represent America abroad. They help make the United States the greatest force for peace, progress, and human dignity the world has ever known. If the last few days teach us anything, let it be this: That this work and the men and women who risk their lives to do it are at the heart of what makes America great and good.

So we will wipe away our tears, stiffen our spines, and face the future undaunted. And we will do it together, protecting and helping one another, just like Sean, Tyrone, Glen, and Chris always did. May God bless them and grant their families peace and solace, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

And now, let me have the great honor of introducing someone who came to the State Department earlier this week to grieve with us. He well understands and values the work that these men were doing for our country. The President of the United States.

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