

Trial of suspected Benghazi terror suspect kicks off

The trial for the suspected mastermind of the 2012 Benghazi attacks has begun in Washington DC. **Legalbrief** reports that the trial comes three years after Ahmed Abu Khattala was captured by US special forces in Libya. He has denied charges of conspiring in the attacks on 11 and 12 September 2012. **The Economic Times** reports that assistant US Attorney John Crabb told the jury that Abu **Khattala 'hates America with a vengeance' and his 'hatred simmered until it boiled over'**. US Ambassador Chris Stevens was killed along with Sean Patrick Smith, a State Department information management officer. Nearly eight hours later at a CIA complex nearby, two more Americans, contract security officers Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, died in a mortar attack. Libya was plunged into chaos following a Nato-backed 2011 uprising that toppled and later killed long-time dictator Muammar Gaddafi. It is split between rival parliaments, governments and militias in the east and west. **The New York Times** reports that defence attorney Jeffrey Robinson argued that Khattala was a scapegoat. While the attacks were tragic, he said, no credible evidence would show that his client was responsible. 'The evidence is going to show that there were other people who were the brains behind the attack and masterminded the attack,' Robinson said. 'Mr. Abu Khattala is just someone who we have decided – the government has decided, Libya has decided – can be blamed.' The Libyan militia leader was captured in June 2014. **The Washington Post** reports that he has pleaded not guilty to all charges.