

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 28, 2013

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Foreign Affairs are conducting oversight of policies affecting the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel abroad. Inevitably, and to varying degrees, U.S. personnel overseas are at risk of physical harm. It is the duty of the State Department, in concert with other federal agencies, to ensure that security for American personnel abroad is a top priority. As a part of our oversight, the Committees have reviewed the terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities and personnel on September 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya that resulted in the deaths of four Americans.

Of central interest to our investigations has been the Department's convening of an Accountability Review Board (ARB), whose findings and recommendations were transmitted to Congress on December 18, 2012.<sup>1</sup> We appreciate your commitment to ensure appropriate actions are taken to safeguard the security of the Department's facilities and personnel abroad. We also look forward to the Department's forthcoming report to Congress, as directed by the Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986. The Act requires that "the Secretary shall, not later than 90 days after the receipt of [the ARB's] recommendations, submit a report to the Congress on each recommendation and the action taken with respect to that recommendation."<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, the ARB did not address some important questions about the attacks in Benghazi, which we believe may contain crucial lessons learned for other U.S. facilities abroad to follow. This may be due, in part, to its failure to interview the senior-most officials at the State Department, including you, Deputy Secretary William J. Burns, and Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Thomas R. Nides. We believe this was a critical omission from the ARB's review of the facts leading up to the attack.

The report also did not address the reasons why Under Secretary Patrick F. Kennedy apparently withdrew the Security Support Team from Libya, despite multiple warnings from Ambassador Christopher Stevens of a deteriorating security situation. This was a key decision that detrimentally affected the security posture of U.S. diplomats in Libya prior to the attack. Further, the Board's inattention to this decision raises the possibility that the number of individuals responsible for the lack of security may be greater than those referred to in the report.

Additionally, questions remain as to why the Department maintained an independent and isolated post in an increasingly volatile and dangerous city, and whether there are facilities in other countries facing similar circumstances. It is our understanding that the answers to such questions may exist in many unclassified documents reviewed by the ARB, but not divulged in its report or provided to congressional committees. These documents are essential for a thorough

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<sup>1</sup> Department of State, *Accountability Review Board for Benghazi Attack of September 2012*, December 19, 2012, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/202446.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> 22 U.S.C. § 4834 (1986).

review that will aid congressional efforts to improve U.S. personnel and facility security overseas.

Therefore, to assist with its oversight efforts, the Committees respectfully requests all documents and information reviewed by the ARB to develop its findings and recommendations reported on December 18, 2012, including, but not limited to:

1. Documents and communications, including e-mails, cables, and memoranda sent or received by you, Deputy Secretary Burns, Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources Nides, and Undersecretary for Management Kennedy, and their respective staffs, referring or relating to physical security platforms, security personnel staffing, security planning, and diplomatic security;
2. A complete list of every individual - including name, title, and agency - interviewed by the ARB for the December 19, 2012, report, and any documents and communications referring or relating to the interviews; and
3. Video footage of the September 11, 2012, attack on the Benghazi compound.

We request that you deliver copies of the requested documents and information for the Committees' possession as soon as possible, but **no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 11, 2013**. When producing documents to the Committees, please deliver production sets to the Majority and Minority offices of each committee. The Committees prefer, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Brien Beattie of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform or Thomas Alexander of the Committee on Foreign Affairs at 202-225-5074, and 202-225-5021, respectively. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Edward R. Royce  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Affairs



Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel, Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Foreign Affairs

The Honorable John F. Tierney, Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on National Security, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform