

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congress continues to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2012, terrorist attack on the U.S. Special Mission Compound (SMC) in Benghazi, Libya, which claimed the lives of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. This includes an examination of whether the U.S. Government's response to the attack at the SMC was sufficient and timely. According to a recent report, there may have been an attempt to delay the deployment of resources to assist our diplomats. If accurate, this is a troubling development meriting a full explanation by this Administration.

On October 27, 2013, during an episode of CBS News' *60 Minutes*, Lara Logan reported that CIA personnel responded to the attack on the SMC despite being ordered to wait. She stated:

About 30 minutes into the attack, a quick reaction force from the CIA Annex ignored orders to wait and raced to the compound, at times running and shooting their way through the streets just to get there.¹

Logan's report was not the first to raise questions about the difficulties that the Annex response team encountered when they moved to assist their colleagues *in extremis*.

In October 2012, news outlets reported that a team from the Annex was delayed in responding to the attack on the SMC because it was initially unable to obtain official authorization to do so.² At the time, Administration officials downplayed the 24-minute interval between the time the Annex learned of the attack and the response team's departure by arguing that the time was spent attempting to secure support from local militias.³ Notwithstanding the reason for the delay, it is highly probable that it was during this time that Ambassador Stevens and his colleague Sean Smith perished.

¹ CBS NEWS, *60 Minutes: Benghazi*, Oct. 27, 2013, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-18560_162-57609479/60-minutes-benghazi/.

² See, e.g., Jennifer Griffin, *EXCLUSIVE: CIA operators were denied request for help during Benghazi attack, sources say*, FOXNEWS, Oct. 26, 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/10/26/cia-operators-were-denied-request-for-help-during-benghazi-attack-sources-say/>.

³ David Ignatius, *In Benghazi timeline, CIA errors but no evidence of conspiracy*, WASH. POST, Nov. 1, 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-11-01/opinions/35505472_1_cia-officers-cia-base-cia-leadership; see also *Officials counter reports on Benghazi attacks*, ASSOC. PRESS, Nov. 1, 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1112/83195.html>.

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It is important to resolve these lingering questions about the authorities and responsibilities of the Annex security team for responding to an emergency at the SMC. To assist the congressional investigation, please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible, but by no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 12, 2013:

1. Who ordered Annex personnel to "wait" or otherwise delay their response to the SMC, and for what purpose?
2. All documents and communications between and among employees of the State Department and components of the national security apparatus, including, but not limited to, the Department of Defense, the CIA, and the National Security Staff, referring or relating to the Annex response to the attack on the SMC on September 11-12, 2012.
3. All audio and visual documentation of the Annex response to the attack on the SMC on September 11-12, 2012.
4. All documents and communications referring or relating to the inclusion of the Annex in any formal or informal emergency response plan for the SMC, to include any related training, preparation or other considerations undertaken by State Department personnel.

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

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform



Ed Royce
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs

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

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