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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974
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October 29, 2012

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 continues to conduct oversight of the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and his colleagues on September 11, 2012, in Benghazi, Libya. The Benghazi facility was bombed twice in the months immediately preceding the 9/11 anniversary terrorist attack. These increasingly sophisticated attacks – in conjunction with the assassination attempt against the British ambassador – should have been a stark warning to this administration that a more serious event was imminent. We are concerned, however, that the State Department may not have conducted thorough investigations of these incidents in order to ensure that the Mission was properly resourced and protected.

Descriptions of the two bombings were contained in a report submitted to the State Department's Washington, D.C., headquarters in July 2011.¹ On April 6, 2012, two former Libyan employees threw a "fish bomb" over the Benghazi compound wall. According to the report, no employees were injured but a limited amount of damage was caused to the interior of a wall.

On June 6, 2012, attackers struck the compound with a larger improvised explosive device that blew a 12-foot hole in a perimeter wall. A summary of the attack provided to the State Department noted the following:

On June 6, 2012, at approximately 0325 hours, the U.S. Mission in Benghazi was the target of an IED attack. The Mission's local guard force reported a suspicious male individual wearing "Islamic" dress exit a passing vehicle and approach the front gate of the Mission. The guards...stated they saw the subject place a device at what appeared to be the ledge of the perimeter wall, approximately 3 feet from the ground...Approximately 6 minutes

¹ "Security Incidents Since June 2011," *U.S. Embassy – Tripoli, Libya* at 44 (on file with author).

after [the Mission's alarm was activated], the device exploded, creating a large hole in the perimeter wall... The Imprisoned Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman Brigades reportedly claimed credit for the attack.²

According to a report prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress in conjunction with the Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office's Irregular Warfare Support Program, the Imprisoned Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman Brigades is a known jihadist group which may be affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and which claimed responsibility for several attacks on international targets in eastern Libya.³

On June 6, 2012, State Department Deputy Spokesperson Mark C. Toner was asked about the attack in the daily press briefing. Particularly, a reporter asked whether the Department believed the bombing was carried out in retaliation for the death of Abu Yahya al-Libi, and whether the Department had asked for security to be tightened at the facility. Mr. Toner replied that the Department asked the Libyan Ministry to increase its security around U.S. facilities and saw "reports from one group claiming responsibilities (sic) for this attack. But there's an investigation right now by the Government of Libya, so we'll let that play out."⁴ It was unclear, however, whether the Department would be conducting its own investigation or simply relying on the Libyans to investigate themselves.

Given the deaths of four Americans at the same facility just three months later, We are sure you agree that the results of any investigation into the previous attacks would shed valuable light on how the administration sought to ensure that U.S. Mission Libya was properly resourced and protected. Therefore, we ask that you please provide the following **no later than close of business on Monday, November 5, 2012**:

1. The results of the Libyan investigation of the June 6, 2012, IED attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi referenced by State Department spokesman Mark Toner;
2. The results of any State Department investigation of the April 6, 2012, and June 6, 2012, IED attacks on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi;
3. Whether any investigation by the Government of Libya or the Government of the United States identified the group or individuals responsible for the April 6, 2012, and June 6, 2012, IED attacks on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi and whether that attack constituted an act of terrorism;
4. Whether the State Department considered the results of any such investigation while continuing to decrease security for U.S. Mission Libya during the months preceding the September 11, 2012, attack; and

² *Id.*

³ "Al-Qaeda in Libya: A Profile," *The Library of Congress* (August 2012) at 4 (on file with author).

⁴ U.S. Department of State Daily Press Briefing, Washington, D.C., June 6, 2012.

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5. Whether any individual responsible for the April 6, 2012, and June 6, 2012, IED attacks were captured, prosecuted, or otherwise held accountable for their actions by either the Government of Libya or the United States Government.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and may at "any time" investigate "any matter" as set forth in House Rule X. When producing documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Thomas Alexander or Brien Beattie of the Committee Staff at 202-225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Darrell Issa
Chairman

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman, Subcommittee on
National Security, Homeland Defense,
and Foreign Operations

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

The Honorable John F. Tierney, Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense, and Foreign Operations