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STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
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The terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012 took the lives of four brave Americans: Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods.

I knew and admired Chris Stevens. He was one of our nation's most accomplished diplomats, previously serving in Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jerusalem during the second intifada.

I didn't have the privilege of meeting Sean Smith personally, but he was also a valued member of our State Department family. An Information Management officer, he was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, and served in embassies and consulates in Pretoria, Baghdad, Montreal, and The Hague.

Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, who worked for the CIA and were killed at the Agency's outpost in Benghazi, were both former Navy SEALs and trained paramedics with distinguished records of service, including in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As you know, what happened in Benghazi has been scrutinized by an Accountability Review Board, seven previous Congressional investigations, multiple news organizations, and law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Along with other senior Obama administration officials, I also testified about this matter before both the Senate and the House. Today, I would like to summarize the statement I provided to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on January 23, 2013.

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First, the terrorist attacks in Benghazi are part of a broader strategic challenge to the United States and our partners in North Africa.

It's important we understand the context for this challenge, as we work together to protect our people and honor our fallen colleagues. Any clear-eyed examination of

this matter must begin with this sobering fact: Since 1988, there have been 19 Accountability Review Boards investigating attacks on American diplomats and their facilities. Since 1977, 65 American diplomatic personnel have been killed by terrorists.

In addition to those who have been killed, we know what happened in Tehran, with hostages being taken in 1979; our embassy and Marine barracks bombed in Beirut in 1983; Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996; our embassies in East Africa in 1998; consulate staff murdered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2004; the Khost attack in Afghanistan in 2009; and too many others.

But I also want to stress the list of attacks that were foiled, crises averted, and lives saved, is even longer. We should never forget that the security professionals get it right more than 99 percent of the time against difficult odds, because the terrorists only need to get it right once. That's why, like all my predecessors, I trusted the diplomatic security professionals with my life.

Administrations of both parties, in partnership with Congress, have made concerted and good-faith efforts to learn from the tragedies that have occurred, to implement recommendations from the review boards, to seek the necessary resources to better protect our people in a constantly-evolving threat environment. In fact, of the nineteen Accountability Review Boards that have been held since 1988, only two have been made public. I want to stress that, because the two that have been made public, coming out of the East Africa embassy bombings, and this one regarding Benghazi, were honest attempts by the State Department, by the Secretary -- Secretary Albright and myself -- to be as transparent and open as possible.

We wanted to be sure that whatever these independent, non-partisan boards found would be made available to the Congress, and to the American people. Because as I said many times since September 11th, I take responsibility. And I was determined to leave the State Department and our country safer, stronger, and more secure.

Now, taking responsibility meant not only moving quickly in those first uncertain hours and days to respond to the immediate crisis, but also to make sure we were protecting our people and posts in high-threat areas across the region and the world.

It also meant launching an independent investigation to determine exactly what

happened in Benghazi and to recommend steps for improvement. It also meant intensifying our efforts to combat terrorism, and support emerging democracies in North Africa and beyond.

Let me share briefly the lessons we have learned. First, let's start on the night of September 11th itself, and those difficult early days. I directed our response from the State Department and stayed in close contact with officials from across our government and the Libyan government.

So I did see firsthand what Ambassador Pickering and Chairman Mullen called "timely and exceptional coordination." No delays in decision-making, no denials of support from Washington, or from our military.

And I want to echo the review board's praise for the valor and courage of our people on the ground, especially our security professionals in Benghazi and Tripoli. The board said our response saved American lives in real time, and it did.

The very next morning, I told the American people, "Heavily-armed militants assaulted our compound," and vowed to bring them to justice. And I stood later that day with President Obama as he spoke of an act of terror.

At this same time period, we were also seeing violent attacks on our embassies in Cairo, Sana'a, Tunis, and Khartoum, as well as large protests outside many other posts from India to Indonesia, where thousands of our diplomats serve. So I immediately ordered a review of our security posture around the world, with particular scrutiny for high-threat posts. And I asked the Department of Defense to join interagency security assessment teams, and to dispatch hundreds of additional Marine security guards.

I named the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for high-threat posts so that missions in dangerous places would get the attention they need. And we reached out to Congress, to help address physical vulnerabilities, including risks from fire, and to hire additional diplomatic security personnel, and Marine security guards.

Second, even as I took these steps, I quickly moved to appoint the Accountability Review Board, because I wanted them to come forward with their report before I left, because I felt the responsibility, and I wanted to be sure that I was putting in motion the response to whatever they found. What was wrong? How do we fix it?

I accepted every one of their recommendations. Our Deputy Secretary for

Management and Resources, Tom Nides, led a task force to ensure that all 29 were implemented quickly, and completely, as well as pursuing additional steps above and beyond the board.

Implementation began on all 29 recommendations. They were translated into 64 specific action items and assigned to specific bureaus and offices with clear timelines for completion.

We also took a top to bottom look to rethink how we make decisions on where, when, and whether our people should operate in high-threat areas, and how we respond. We initiated an annual high-threat post review, chaired for the first time by the Secretary of State. And ongoing reviews by the deputy secretaries to ensure that pivotal questions about security reach the highest level. And we worked to regularize protocols for sharing information with Congress.

In addition to the immediate action we took, and the review board process, we moved on a third front: addressing the broader strategic challenge in North Africa, and the wider region. Benghazi did not happen in a vacuum. The Arab revolutions scrambled power dynamics, and shattered security forces across the region.

The United States must continue to lead, in the Middle East, in North Africa, and around the globe. When America is absent, especially from unstable environments, there are consequences. Extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened. That's why Chris Stevens went to Benghazi in the first place. I asked him to go. During the beginning of the revolution against Gadhafi, we needed somebody in Benghazi who could begin to build bridges with the insurgents and to begin to demonstrate that America would stand against Gadhafi.

Nobody knew the dangers, or the opportunities better than Chris. First during the revolution, and then during the transition. A weak Libyan government, marauding militias, even terrorist groups, a bomb exploded in the parking lot of his hotel. He never wavered. He never asked to come home. He never said, let's shut it down, quit and go somewhere else, because he understood it was critical for America to be represented in that place, at that pivotal time.

So, we do have to work harder and better to balance the risks and the opportunities. Our men and women who serve overseas understand that we do accept a level of risk to represent and protect the country we love. They represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation.

They cannot work in bunkers and do their jobs. But it is our responsibility to make sure they have the resources they need to do those jobs and to do everything we can to reduce the risks they face.

For me, this is not just a matter of policy, it's personal because I had the great honor to lead the men and women of the State Department and USAID -- nearly 70,000 serving here in Washington and at more than 275 posts around the world. They get up, and go to work every day, often in difficult, and dangerous circumstances, thousands of miles from home, because they believe the United States is the most extraordinary force for peace and progress the earth has ever known. And when we suffer tragedies overseas, the number of Americans apply to the Foreign Service actually increases.

That tells us everything we know about the kind of patriots I'm talking about. They do ask what they can do for their country, and America is stronger for it.

After traveling nearly a million miles and visiting 112 countries as Secretary of State, my faith in our country and our future is stronger than ever. Every time that blue and white airplane carrying the words "United States of America" touched down in some far off capital, I felt again the honor it was to represent the world's indispensable nation.