

**BENGAZI AND BEYOND, PART I:  
WHAT WENT WRONG ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2012  
AND HOW TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING  
AT OTHER FRONTLINE POSTS**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2012**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The committee will come to order.

After recognizing myself and the ranking member, Mr. Berman, for 7 minutes each for opening statements, I will recognize the chairmen and ranking members of our various subcommittees for 3 minutes each for their opening statements. I will then recognize all other members for 1-minute opening statement.

We will hear from our witnesses, and I would ask that you summarize your prepared statements in 5 minutes each before we move to the question and answers part with the members under the 5-minute rule.

Without objection, the witnesses' prepared statements will be made part of the record and members may have 5 days to insert questions and statements for the record subject to the length limitation in the rules.

Before I begin my opening statement, I also want to state for the record that my remarks and questions were written prior to an interagency classified briefing that the committee held yesterday afternoon.

Further, I would like to note that Secretary Clinton has committed to testifying before our committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Accountability Review Board's report, which is expected to be concluded by early to mid-December.

Also before beginning, I want to assure the families and friends of four brave Americans killed in the attack on the consulate in Benghazi and our diplomatic personnel serving in high-risk posts worldwide that we are committed to recognizing what went wrong and what needs to be done to prevent any further American lives from being lost in such attacks. Our thoughts and prayers are also with those wounded during the attack as they face a long and difficult recovery. The Chair now recognizes herself for 7 minutes for an opening statement.

The coordinated, preplanned and brazen attacks against the U.S. consulate in Benghazi on September 11th was an outrage. Also disgraceful is the sad parade of conflicting accounts of the attack that we have received from administration officials in the weeks and months since.

Successive revelations and public reports indicate that the administration failed to adequately protect the American consulate and denied consulate requests for additional security. It has come to light that the administration was warned of the deteriorating security situation in Benghazi 1 month before the attack on September 11th, with the personnel stationed at the post asserting that they could not withstand a coordinated assault.

We also know that our consulate sustained two previous attacks this year and that there were approximately 10 Islamic militia and extremist training camps nearby. Yet the administration denied repeated requests for additional security measures.

We have also learned that the consulate alerted both Libyan authorities and the administration about members of the Libyan security forces possibly compromised with ties to extremists as they were caught photographing the consulate prior to the attack, and still the consulate's requests for additional security were ignored.

The consulate even warned that the situation was trending negatively and that the daily pattern of violence was the new normal given the minimal capabilities of the Libyan security forces. These revelations make clear that the security situation was deteriorating and that the administration was aware that the security was grossly inadequate.

Under Secretary Kennedy publicly testified that the assault on September 11th was an unprecedented attack by dozens of heavily armed men. This explanation is unsatisfactory. You have the al-Qaeda attacks against our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and, more recently, the 2008 assassination of U.S. diplomat John Granville in Sudan, as well as repeated attacks in Pakistan, including the 2008 attack on our U.S. consulate general's armored vehicle, the April 2010 attack by militants against the U.S. consulate, killing three Pakistani security officers and a civilian in a gun battle outside the building, and the bomb attack on the vehicle of two U.S. consulate employees just days before Benghazi, on September 4th. Adding to that the now publicly documented string of incidents prior to 9/11/12, how could the Benghazi attack have come as a surprise or be deemed as unprecedented.

Unfortunately, the legitimate security concerns from personnel on the ground sometimes go unheeded by executive branch officials. For example, prior to the 1998 Nairobi attack, Ambassador Prudence Bushnell had warned of the extreme vulnerability of the Embassy, but her concerns were discounted based on faulty threat assessments and inadequate intelligence. In an op-ed in the aftermath of the Benghazi attack, Ambassador Bushnell stated that "for 2 years before my team and I fought, nagged was word State Department colleagues used, to have security threats and vulnerabilities addressed. We were too close to the street, an easy target. Washington's assessment was that things were okay."

The events leading up to the attacks of September 11th of this year appear to repeat the same disastrous pattern. This time, we

must learn the lessons and fix the problems. In addressing these underlying issues, we must move past the perennial question of what did the administration know and when did they know it and toward actually defining the problem.

In this respect, I would ask our witnesses to consider the following: What are your recommendations for improving both the security assessment process within diplomatic security and overall Embassy security? What systematic issues do you believe need to be re-addressed? How do you believe the State Department should reevaluate the risk-assessment process for other vulnerable U.S. sites overseas as a result of the Benghazi attacks? What are the critical components of any re-assessment regarding attacks against Benghazi as well as our posts in Egypt and Yemen on 9/11 and on the ensuing days and weeks? What are your thoughts or what can be done to ensure greater cooperation and coordination between U.S. agencies, including embedding other agencies in high-risk diplomatic posts with an expertise in security, such as an FBI presence beyond the LEGATT officer? What are your thoughts on altering individual missions within the Embassy structure, such as changing the Marine Corps' detachment's mission within high-risk posts?

The Government Accountability Office has been looking into this issue for some time and has repeatedly stated that the Diplomatic Security Service continues to face staff shortages and operational challenges that tax its ability to provide protection over an increasing number of dangerous posts. GAO has called for the State Department to perform a strategic review of diplomatic security so that it can properly allocate its resources and balance security needs with the diplomatic mission. However, the State Department has failed to follow up on this recommendation with the result, according to GAO, that diplomatic security, or DS, fails to perform adequate training and oversight.

Among other things, without strategic planning, DS is forced to utilize stopgap measures, including detailing domestic officers to unfamiliar overseas posts, to make up for shortages in protective details.

Realistic security assessments need to be conducted, and we must ensure that our frontline diplomats are provided the necessary protection to do their jobs effectively. Our frontline diplomats should be secure in the knowledge that the United States Government will provide for their safety while they carry out their duties on behalf of our country. Safety must not be sacrificed on the altar of vague and uncertain agendas or other pet projects, from climate change to bailouts for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, whose value is questionable. Our diplomatic personnel deserve no less.

With that, I turn to my friend, the ranking member, Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and thank you for calling this hearing on a very important and pertinent issue, the safety and security of our embassies and missions around the world.

It has been a little over 2 months since the tragic events in Benghazi, where terrorists attacked our consulate and killed four

dedicated and courageous American public servants. I want to again convey my condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of Ambassador Christopher Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods. These men committed their lives to advancing our values and interests in often dangerous places. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Today we have responsibility to help ensure that we better protect Americans serving abroad; not only in Libya, but in all of our nearly 300 diplomatic posts around the globe. As Congress examines the Benghazi tragedy, it is important that we not jump to conclusions before we know all of the facts, and these facts are being gathered as we speak by an Accountability Review Board, or ARB. The ARB is tasked by the State Department to analyze what happened, why it happened and what can be done to reduce the risks facing our personnel in the future.

The practice of establishing ARBs after security incidents at our diplomatic posts began in the 1980s based on a recommendation of the so-called Inman Report, which itself was a response to the bombing of U.S. facilities in Beirut which caused massive casualties. In 1986, Congress made the establishment of ARBs a requirement under law. Since then, at least a dozen of them have been set up under both Democratic and Republican administrations.

This particular Accountability Review Board is being chaired by Thomas Pickering, a highly respected and experienced diplomat. His 45 years with the State Department, including service as Ambassador in six countries with serious security challenges, makes him particularly well suited for this position. Among the other members of the Board is retired Admiral Mike Mullen, until recently the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So I think we have the right people in place for the job.

Their report, along with the recommendations to Secretary Clinton, is supposed to be ready early next month, as the chairman mentioned.

As a result of the ARB investigation, I expect the State Department to examine our security posture at posts around the world, including temporary facilities, like Benghazi, in order to determine whether the diplomatic security and the Overseas Buildings Operations Bureaus should institute new security procedures.

There are several critical questions which I hope this hearing will help answer: Should we continue to maintain so-called temporary facilities, like the Benghazi consulate, and, if so, how should we protect them? What steps can we take to be better prepared for the type of large-scale assault that took place at Benghazi? And are we devoting enough resources to help ensure the security of our overseas facilities?

Secretary Clinton put it well when she said, and I quote,

“Our diplomats and development experts are on the front lines, just like our troops, and the entire United States Government needs to work together to protect them. We will not retreat. We will keep leading, and we will stay engaged everywhere in the world, including in those hard places where America’s interests and security are at stake. That is the best way to honor those whom we have lost.”



I could not agree more.

And I thank you, Madam Chairman and yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Berman.

We will now hear from the chairs and ranking members of our subcommittees, starting with Mr. Smith, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Chair, thank you very much for convening this very important hearing and your leadership on this very important issue.

In the 2 months since our Ambassador to Libya and three other Americans were murdered at the U.S. consulate compound in Benghazi, we have been deluged with numerous reports and explanations about what happened, many of which are contradictory. We are now waiting for the report of the Accountability Review Board and hope that it will provide answers to the many unanswered and disturbing questions.

I would note parenthetically that 14 years ago, on almost the same date, another Accountability Review Board was convened to examine the 1998 attacks of our U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. I had the privilege of chairing the oversight hearings of that report and will be looking to see whether the lessons learned from those tragedies were implemented and could have prevented the deaths on September 11th.

I would also note, as Mr. Berman pointed out so well, the Bobby Inman Report back in the 1980s was also very important and provided the framework upon which all of our diplomatic security, including setbacks, putting Mylar and other kind of protective protections on windows, all of that came out of the original Bobby Inman suggestions or recommendations. And, again, we also looked at how many diplomatic security personnel are needed, where they should be deployed. It was all part of a robust effort to protect Americans, especially our Ambassador abroad.

I am deeply disappointed that State Department officials continue to be unavailable for public questioning by this committee. The classified interagency briefing yesterday is of some value, but the American people deserve a clear and honest public explanation of what happened at U.S. facilities in Benghazi and elsewhere in September.

The American public needs to know why our U.S. Ambassador had minimal security protection in a location identified as dangerous as a result of no fewer than eight attacks on the U.S. compound and other Western facilities in the Benghazi area between April and August of this year. They also need to know why, given the circumstances I just described, our Ambassador was under the primary protection of a militia with questionable associations. They need to know why media representatives could go into the Benghazi consulate days after the September 11th incident and recover sensitive materials, including Ambassador Stevens' journal, that our Government obviously failed to secure and recover first. They need to know how our embassies in Egypt, Tunisia and other countries were so vulnerable to attacks by mobs, which not only defaced our facilities but also raised terrorist flags on what is essentially American sovereign territory.

More recently, the resignation of General Petraeus has opened up even more questions, such as what is contained in the report he prepared following his visit to Benghazi. It should be very informative regarding who knew about what threats were involved there, when they knew about it and what they did with the knowledge they provided.

I thank you, Madam Chair, and yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Ackerman, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia is recognized.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the chair for calling this important hearing, and I look forward to learning the facts. I think it is important that we do that instead of some of us launching our own attacks.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Burton, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, is recognized.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Let me just start off by saying that we had a hearing on this issue in the Government Reform and Oversight Committee shortly after this tragedy occurred, and a lot of the information that we received from government officials, publicly and privately, does not comport with the testimony of the people who were at that hearing. The people who were at that hearing consisted of Eric Nordstrom, who was the regional security officer for the U.S. mission in Libya; Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wood, who was in charge of the military support team there, Special Operations Command support team, SST. It was also Charlene Lamb, who was in charge of all of the embassies and consulates around the world as far as security was concerned, who incidentally said when the attack took place, she was following it in real time immediately because she was in Washington in her office at the time. And then we also had Patrick Kennedy, who has testified numerous times about this issue.

And the thing that bothers me the most is that Lieutenant Colonel Wood, in charge of the security force there, the SST, and Eric Nordstrom, the regional security officer, said time and time again they needed more security, particularly at Benghazi, and they were denied. In fact, even though Nordstrom tried to get more security there for Benghazi, he was told you are asking for the moon and the stars.

Now, they were supposed to have five people there, but there was an unwritten law I guess that you could only have three there. And yet when Mr. Nordstrom and Lieutenant Colonel Wood went down and checked the area out, there weren't three even. There were supposed to be five, the unwritten rule was there were three, but there was only one there, only one. The security was lax.

There were 230 different kinds of incidents, some pretty strong attacks, some not so strong, but nevertheless the security officer in charge and the lieutenant colonel in charge of the security people there contacted Washington time and time again and said we need more security, there is a threat of an attack. There had been one attack in Benghazi where they blew a hole in the compound wall, and yet time and again Ms. Lamb and Mr. Kennedy continually said no, we don't need those. No, we don't need those. And they have tried to cover their fannies a number of times in testimony

here in this body or in this House and it does not comport. It is not consistent with what Mr. Nordstrom who was in charge of that region and Lieutenant Colonel Wood said.

This is not only a tragedy, it is a perfect example of malfeasance at the State Department.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Burton.

Mr. Faleomavaega is recognized. He is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I, too, would like to also offer my deepest condolences and sympathies to the family of Ambassador Stevens and the three gentlemen that accompanied him in this tragic incident that occurred in Benghazi. I do want to associate myself with the comments of our ranking member, Mr. Berman.

Hopefully, with the witnesses we have before us, we will be getting a little better understanding of what has happened.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Rohrabacher is recognized. He is the chairman on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much, and thank you for holding this hearing, Madam Chairman. I appreciate your leadership on this and other very significant issues.

Last month, at the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I asked Secretary Lamb, who is the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Programs in the bureau of—let's see her exact title, well, I asked her, she was the one who was specifically responsible for the decision as to what level of spending they would have for security at the Benghazi consulate. I asked her whether budget considerations were actually part of her decision not to increase the level of security. She stated emphatically no, that was not part of it, although some Democrats on the committee and Vice President Biden in the debates during the recent Presidential campaign tried to shift the blame for this debacle to Congress. So it was not a budget consideration that caused this horrible situation where our people were murdered.

What was it then? What did happen? Witnesses at the earlier hearing that I just referred to would not say, and we have been told over and over again, well, we are going to learn the details. But yet, just as late as yesterday, the President said that we would be learning all the details; he would be cooperating with Congress. Yet we have no witness from the administration here with us today to talk to us and to explain under oath what the details of this debacle really are.

What is clear is that this administration, including the President himself, has intentionally misinformed, read that "lied," to the American people in the aftermath of this tragedy. Now President Obama has the gall to float the name as possible Secretary of State the name of the person who is the actual vehicle used to misinform the American people during this crisis. The arrogance and dishonesty reflected in all of this is a little bit breathtaking.

And it is about time that the President of the United States decides to level with the American people. Let's find out the facts.

Let's not stonewall this issue and cover up mistakes as appears to be happening today.

Thank you, Madam Chairman for holding this hearing so we can get to the bottom of all this.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Sherman is recognized. He is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. SHERMAN. I want to thank the administration for providing us with those very details, namely a classified briefing provided yesterday afternoon.

The security of our diplomats depends upon the host country. We are here today discussing whether we should have had two or four or maybe even five security personnel onsite. It is by no means clear that that would not have simply led to more deceased security personnel.

With the number of guns in Benghazi, the number of militias in Benghazi, it is by no means certain that even five of our finest security personnel could have been successful against this attack.

We ultimately have to rely on the Ambassador and people on the ground to know what is safe and what isn't, where to go, where not to go, when and with what security, and ultimately they have to realize there is some risk. And they show heroism every day in going to places where they know there is some risk. And we should not criticize them because what they thought was a small and manageable but still possibly deadly risk turns out to be an absolutely fatal one.

There is a lot of discussion about whether additional assets should have been provided, but much of that discussion focuses on Tripoli rather than Benghazi. There was a drone in the area, but press reports state that it was an unmanned drone.

Congress has a role here. The administration asked us for \$1.65 billion for security. The House cut that by nearly 10 percent in negotiations with the Senate. It still ended up well below the administration request. Yet we cannot say that that particular congressional decision led directly to these results.

There is all this discussion as to whether this was a carefully planned terrorist attack or an ad hoc mob whipped up by some recent reason to hate the United States, and I think much of our confusion relates to the idea of thinking it has to be all of one or all of the other. Newer press reports indicate that it was some of both, an attack that doesn't seem to be overly carefully planned and ad hoc additions from an armed citizenry in Benghazi that includes those that hate us.

Finally, these unfair attacks on Ambassador Susan Rice are simply wrong. She had to rely on the intelligence that was provided. I sat here while Colin Powell provided the intelligence that he had regarding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Ultimately, State Department personnel have to rely on the intelligence reports they are given, and Susan Rice's integrity, capacity and record are beyond question. There is no political reason for the administration to have characterized this attack one way or the other.

And I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

We will now hear from Mr. Royce, who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Madam Chair. Excuse my voice.

We do have to rely on our Ambassadors on the ground and we should listen to them. And one of the eerie experiences here in reading the cables is to realize that there is a foreboding in them in a way in terms of how our personnel think they might be attacked, and it is the fact that those cables were sent and the fact that nothing was done that I think brings us here today.

It is 2 months later, and too little is known about what took place. Too little is known about why we didn't respond to those cables, especially given the fact that the deteriorating situation in Benghazi was no secret, certainly no secret to the United Kingdom, no secret to the Red Cross. Even the security challenged U.N. were very, very concerned about what was about to happen. You had the U.K., the Red Cross closing their office as a result of attacks, RPG attacks on the motorcade. You had the bomb targeting our own mission there. And somebody obviously forgot to circle the calendar only 9/11. We do have some experience with attacks on 9/11.

But it wasn't as though our own U.S. personnel were not warning us of this gathering storm, and that is the other aspect of this as you read the cables that is so concerning when Ambassador Stevens warns of a security vacuum, when another cable cites car bombings, gun battles in the street, growing Islamic influence. Another says al-Qaeda camps were growing and expressed concern about the mission's ability to even defend itself in these circumstances. So our mission there sat in a cauldron of weapons, of fighters, al-Qaeda upwind of Benghazi; its requests for more security denied. But yet a State Department official told Congress last month we had the correct number of assets in Benghazi at the time of 9/11.

Well, that is not the way our personnel felt. I think we will find that the State Department, unfortunately, prioritized the normalization of the relationship with Libya above all else, no matter the facts on the ground, no matter the danger on the ground, and I think our personnel were wise enough to see that that was happening. I have several questions about what took place during the 6 hours, the 6 hours, that our personnel were under attack. Why wasn't more done to protect American lives during that time?

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Royce.

Thank you, sir.

Ms. Bass is recognized. She is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

Ms. BASS. Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Berman, thank you for your leadership and for providing an opportunity to better understand the events that transpired in Libya on the evening of September 11.

I want to commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, for the vigorous call for hearings to get to the bottom of what took place in Benghazi makes clear the commitment we all have to the security of our diplomats. We have an obligation to the American people and to all who serve and represent our Nation to ensure that a tragedy such as this does not happen again on anyone's watch.

The real danger I am concerned about, though, in a situation like this is to rush to judgment before we understand all the available information. I urge my colleagues to allow the State Department's ARB to finish its work so that we have a clear picture of the events of that tragic night. I think it would do a disservice to Ambassador Stevens and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice if we do not take the time necessary to understand what happened.

We do an equal disservice not to come together and address security issues that may impact the nearly 300 U.S. diplomatic facilities abroad. It is vital that we look to the future. Countless Foreign Service and civil servants represent our Nation in challenging environments around the world. They do so not for fame, not for fortune nor prestige, but out of a genuine sense of service and commitment to our Nation. Their sacrifice paid by those in Benghazi reminds us that we, Members of Congress, must do all in our power to ensure these brave and committed women and men are well protected in their service to this great Nation.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Ms. Bass.

Our last 3-minute opening statement will be Mr. Chabot, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I know it has not been easy to pry information out of this administration, and I want to commend you for being relentless in your efforts over the last 3 months to get to the facts surrounding the attacks on American outposts and personnel in Libya, Egypt, Yemen and Tunisia on September 11, not only behalf of this committee, but on behalf of the American people as well and especially for our brave public servants who serve around the world, oftentimes in the face of imminent danger.

I won't use all my 3 minutes, Madam Chair, because we want to be able to get to the testimony of our panel of witnesses this morning and questions from members, but I do want to take a moment to say a couple of words about our late Ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens.

Many members and staff on our committee had the opportunity to know and work with him even before he was named U.S. Ambassador and I think all would agree that he was one of our most able diplomats. I had the opportunity to visit with him in Libya a little less than a month before he and three other outstanding Americans were murdered in Benghazi.

His enthusiasm for the job at hand was immediately evident. He was excited about the opportunity to help a nation newly freed from decades of brutal dictatorship. On my first night in country, I had the opportunity to join Ambassador Stevens for an IFTAR dinner with a number of newly elected Libyan parliamentarians. They were optimistic about building a democracy and creating a vibrant economy and restoring fundamental human rights for the Libyan people, and he was as enthusiastic about those prospects as they were.

The murderers who took the lives of Chris Stevens and his colleagues should take no pride in their cowardly acts. They have merely shown the world that their brand of senseless violence is reprehensible and should be condemned by all decent people.

Madam Chair, I hope these hearings, and I understand that today's meeting is just part one, will bring to light the true facts surrounding the September 11th attacks and will help to create a better diplomatic security system that will prevent similar attacks from taking place in the future.

I look forward to the testimony, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

I thank all the chairmen and ranking members of the pertinent subcommittees, and we will now begin with 1-minute opening statements from our members, starting with Mr. Sires from New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Madam Chairlady, for holding this critical hearing and for investigating the events of September 11 at Benghazi, and let me offer my condolences also to the families of Ambassador Stevens and the three U.S. personnel that were killed.

You know, now that the election is over, let's try to get to the bottom of what happened, because this is an area in transition, and I have a funny feeling that we are going to encounter some of this incident again and again, and I want to make sure that the people that we send to assist in the transition in this area of the world are secure. I do not want to send Americans to a place where the security is not there for them to perform the job that is needed to make sure that the transition in these areas is a safe one. So I would hope that after the investigation, we can determine exactly what happened and we can make the necessary arrangements to make sure it doesn't happen again.

I am also interested in terms of—there is talk about a safe house where we can put our personnel, and if you can expand on that, that would be great, because I think we need to make sure that everybody is secure in this area.

Thank you very much.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. Thank you, Madam Chair, for calling this hearing, and our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the four innocent Americans who were killed serving our country.

The American people have legitimate questions and deserve answers from the President, the State Department, the Department of Defense and the CIA as to what happened on the evening of September 11th, 2012. Why did the administration refuse to send an immediate response after the consulate requested it during the 6-hour attack? Why did the administration place blame on a video rather than reveal to the world that it was an organized terrorist attack? And more importantly, why has the administration failed to provide answers to these valid questions after 2 months of inquiry?

It is my hope that the appropriate officials of this administration will appear before Congress and provide us with the answers the American people deserve. Senator Lindsey Graham has reported 13 separate letters have been sent over the past month seeking explanations. The American people deserve to know for the protection of our country and American families.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I thank you Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Berman for convening this hearing to focus on the events of September 11 in Benghazi. I want to begin by extending my thoughts and prayers to the family of the late Ambassador Christopher Stevens and the families of the other three American heroes who lost their lives in service of our Nation.

I hope that as we conduct this hearing we recognize that we owe them a careful, comprehensive and thorough review of this matter.

We ask Americans to serve our Nation all over the world and recognize that we need to be engaged in places all over the world, even in places that are dangerous, but we owe it to them to be sure that we are doing everything that we can to ensure the safety of our diplomats.

I thank you for convening this hearing so we can review this in great detail. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Judge Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. We must have accountability for the assassination of four Americans on the anniversary of 9/11, accountability for those who failed to protect the Americans and accountability for the murderers. I have written a letter to Secretary Panetta asking him if there was evidence that United States weapons were used in the attack on our consulate until Benghazi. I haven't heard back from him, and I ask unanimous consent that that letter be made part of the record.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Mr. POE. The morning after the attack, I mentioned on the House floor that the terrorist group Ansar al Sharia claimed responsibility for the attack. This was public knowledge within 24 hours of the attack. But for 2 weeks after the attack, the administration blamed the attack on a YouTube video. That was a patently false assertion at the time.

We have yet to see any justice in this matter. The FBI took 24 days to get to the attack site, long after media groups from all over the world had been there. Americans have been receiving much misinformation from our Government. The perpetrators need to be brought to justice and those responsible for the lack of security need to be held accountable, because justice is what we do in this country. And that is just the way it is.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Wilson of Florida.

Ms. WILSON OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Madam Chair, and Ranking Member for holding this important hearing.

The September attacks at the U.S. consulate in Benghazi ended tragically with the death of four Americans. First, it is important to honor the sacrifices of these Americans who gave their lives promoting and protecting American ideals of democracy and freedom abroad.



I wish to convey my sympathy to the families of the fallen heroes.

And to honor those Americans, it is essential that we maximize security protocols for U.S. diplomatic posts in volatile areas and ensure that contingency plans are in place to prevent loss of life and U.S. property abroad.

The FBI and the State Department are thoroughly investigating the Benghazi events, and it is important that this committee provides appropriate assistance to those agencies so that we may get to the bottom of the situation, as well as find ways to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Ms. Wilson.

Mrs. Schmidt of Ohio is recognized.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

First off, my heart goes out to the families of those who lost their loved ones, including Ambassador Christopher Stevens, Foreign Officer Sean Smith, U.S. Security Officers Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods.

But I think we need to have a real honest explanation of what happened. First off, could this have been prevented, and secondly, how can we ensure that those that are in harm's way will never have this happen to them again.

I think the saddest part about all of this is that we are not getting clear explanations to date. This administration continues to put out things that are just not quite true, starting with the YouTube video, on September 11th, as the explanation, which continued on to September the 18th, until finally, on September 19th, Matthew Olson, Director of National Counterterrorism Intelligence, did confirm what we heard on September 12, that, yes, this was an attack conducted by al-Qaeda terrorists. We need to know what the bottom of this is, and I hope we can find it out in this hearing.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Ms. Schwartz of Pennsylvania.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Thank you. I just wanted to add my words, of course, of sympathy for America the loss of Ambassador Stevens and the other fine Americans who lost their lives in Benghazi, and I hope that in this hearing and in future discussions, we will be able to honor their service by making sure we fully understand what happened, what could have happened differently potentially and, maybe most importantly, identify lessons learned so that our Embassy personnel at every level serving in dangerous parts of the world, as they do, that we protect them as best as we can. I hope that is the result of these conversations going forward.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson of Ohio.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Like my colleagues, I, too, am saddened and outraged by the terrorist attack in Benghazi that claimed the lives of our four American citizens, including U.S. Ambassador Stevens.

What makes this even harder for me to stomach is the administration's complete failure to provide answers, answers to the families of those killed, to Congress and to the American people.

As a 26-year veteran of the United States Air Force and my last assignment being at U.S. Special Operations Command, I know and understand national security and what it takes to provide it. After 230 security incidents in a year at the Benghazi consulate, I am appalled that the administration could not anticipate escalating violence and then failed to step up security measures to protect our diplomats. Furthermore, we have seen blunder after blunder as the administration avoids responsibility and accountability.

The delay tactics are unacceptable. So now that we have made it past the convenient distraction of an election, I expect to hear some real answers. It is time to 'fess up.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Deutch of Florida is recognized.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing.

Madam Chairman, the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi on September 11 was a grave tragedy. The circumstances surrounding the deaths of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other brave Americans must not be spun for political gain. We must learn from this tragedy. We must get the facts, not make hasty determinations, certainly not hasty political determinations.

We have an obligation to protect the thousands of Americans serving in our embassies and consulates around the world. Today we must focus on how to protect them, how to ensure that they are able to look at after American interests abroad, and how to ensure that they can continue to represent the American ideals that they stand for and that they represent so nobly in every corner of the globe.

I look forward to discussing these issues today, and I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Rivera of Florida.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, for this hearing. I also send my condolences to the families of those brave Americans, those patriotic Americans that gave their lives during this horrible incident. We need to always make sure and honor the great sacrifice they gave personally, but also to our Nation.

I think we can all agree, Democrats and Republicans together, that these events are wholly unacceptable and that Americans demand accountability. The only way to achieve that accountability is to make sure and get all of the facts out.

This hearing is an important step toward achieving accountability. Much more needs to be done, particularly on the part of the administration. But as important as getting that information out toward achieving accountability is to ensure that such an incident never, ever happens again. And I implore the administration to finally recognize that need to have accountability, get all the facts out, and ensure that a similar incident is never repeated.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Keating of Massachusetts.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Madam Chairman, ranking member.

I just want to give my sympathy to the family members of those heroes who lost their lives.

I want to also mention and thank the information we have had thus far, including in secure briefings in this regard.

And I also want to just mention as someone who has been involved in many forensic investigations myself in my own career, things take time. The most important thing is to get it right, and the most important thing after that is to bring those responsible to justice, and I remain confident that that will occur.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner of New York.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

In all these emergency situations, there are protocols and procedures that are in place. The timeline would suggest there are serious lapses in both the communication and judgment and our response time. I don't know if these procedures were followed. I don't know why it took 90 minutes before the Secretary of Defense even knew about this, and why were these delays made? And what was the cost of them? And what can we do to fix this in the future?

Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Engel, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, is recognized now recognized for his 3-minute opening statement.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

As we begin this hearing about what happened in Benghazi and the lessons we can learn, there is one thing I keep in mind throughout, the respect I have for America's diplomats and the gratitude this committee should show them. We ought never forget that the work of diplomacy has risks and that our Foreign Service officers who travel to all parts of the globe to promote and defend the United States' interests deserve our full support.

For me, that is what this hearing is about. It is about understanding the facts of what happened in Libya and elsewhere on September 11 and 12 of this year and how we can learn from these events to make sure that our diplomats can achieve the difficult balance between security and forward presence. How can we ensure that there is enough security for Ambassadors and Embassy staff alike so that they can observe the countries where they are posted and meet with as many people as they can and yet do so safely?

It is not an easy question. I am glad that Secretary of State Clinton has appointed a Blue Ribbon Accountability Review Board, led by former Ambassador Pickering, to look into what happened and to make recommendations. I think this committee should ask all of the questions it needs to ask today. We want to get to the bottom of what really happened, and there are some questions that need to be asked. But we should also defer judgment until the ARB issues its findings.

Let us agree to make this hearing about how American diplomats can be as safe and effective as possible. Let's not devolve into a political spectacle. Friends, the campaign is over, the signs have been taken down. TV commercials are again about Ginsu knives and exercise videos and Americans have had enough of it. They want us to solve problems and not go on political witch hunts.

I am very disturbed at some of the political rhetoric I hear. You know, Barack Obama was no more responsible for what happened in Benghazi than George Bush was for September 11th or that Ronald Reagan was with the blowing up of the U.S. Marines in Beirut. And in times of national tragedy, what we really need to do is band together as Americans and show that we are united against the forces of terrorism or others that would do us harm.

I don't think playing political games is what we should do. We want to get to the bottom of this. We don't want anything to be covered up, but I think that we have to do that from a point of view of American unity; not to try to score political points here and there, not to try to point fingers at the President or the administration, but to say what went wrong and how can we fix it so that it doesn't go wrong in the future.

So I, like my colleagues, want to talk about Ambassador Stevens and the other three martyrs who died. We will never forget their service, we will never forget them. Let's use this hearing to make sure all Americans in the future remain safe.

I thank you, Madam Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

Mrs. Ellmers of North Carolina is recognized for 1 minute.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I echo the notion of sympathy for those families of our murdered Ambassador and the other Americans in this terrorist attack.

I have to further say that America and these families need to know the truth, and that is what our job is. And I have to say that I deeply resent this continued notion on the part of our colleagues that this is a political issue and that there will be political gain made here. The fact that they continue on this pursuit actually makes it a political issue for them.

Now, we have got to get to the bottom of this, and that means we are going to have to look at these issues constructively and find out what went wrong and how we can prevent it in the future, and we have got to put this political notion aside.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Connolly of Virginia is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

You know, I just want to observe that a tragedy occurred. It ought to be something that brings us together. It ought not to be a political football. It ought not to be an opportunity to smear other people's reputations, prevent other people from participating in a meaningful way in the formation and enunciation of U.S. foreign policy. Those are tactics this Congress ultimately condemned during the Joe McCarthy era. Let's not revisit that. Let's not return to that.

Let's have a rational, analytical examination of what happened so we can learn from this tragedy and try to take measures to prevent it. That is what we ought to do for the sake of our country, and I urge that we resist the temptation to persist in political posturing to try to find some elusive advantage. The election is over, and this tragedy needs to be dealt with.

I yield back, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Kelley, the vice chair on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have both claimed responsibility for the Benghazi situation. Yesterday at a press conference, the President said, and I quote, And you know, we are after an election now. I think it is important for us to find out exactly what happened in Benghazi, and I am happy to cooperate in any ways that Congress wants. We have provided every bit of information that we have, and we will continue to provide information, and we have got a full-blown investigation and all that information will be disgorged to done.

Yet this administration has not provided any witnesses who are part of the State Department's chain of command with respect to diplomatic security to appear at this hearing: Specifically Hillary Clinton Secretary of State; Patrick Kennedy, Department of State Under Secretary for Management; Eric Boswell, Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security; Charlene Lamb, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs, Bureau of Diplomatic Security; Scott Bultrowicz, Director of Diplomatic Security Service; and Jim Bacigalupo, Regional Director, Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Now, this administration has failed to respond to a letter I sent on behalf of 53 Members of Congress. It details questions regarding the security failures. I would like to introduce that into the record, if I may.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection. And thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Fortenberry, the vice chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you Madam Chair for calling this important hearing today. Sadly, again, we must remind ourselves that Ambassador Stevens and three other Americans are dead, and we all wish to extend our heartfelt sympathies to their families.

But I think it is important today at this hearing that we have a few questions answered. We need to know why the Ambassador's expressed security concerns and calls for help were unmet; why reinforcements never arrived; why the U.S. compounds were left unsecured for so long after these attacks; and why the official video narrative persisted so stubbornly long after it was clear that the attack that killed Ambassador Stevens was terroristic in nature.

Madam Chair, I hope today's hearing is a constructive and honest unpacking of so many contradicting pieces of information. I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Marino of Pennsylvania.

Mr. MARINO. I have no statement. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

President Obama is sadly mistaken if he thinks the House of Representatives won't get to the bottom of the Benghazi tragedy and hold him responsible if the evidence points to the White House.

If Ambassador Rice had nothing to do the Benghazi cover up, then why did the administration use her as a mouthpiece to mislead the American people on five Sunday talk shows? The American people will have answers to the questions of what led to the deaths of four brave Americans as well as the actions from the administration in the days following.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Griffin of Arkansas?

Or Mr. Bilirakis of Florida.

Thank you. So, with that, the Chair is pleased to welcome our witnesses on the first panel, Michael J. Courts.

Mr. Courts is the Government Accountability Office, GAO, acting director in the agency's International Affairs and Trade Team. Mr. Courts began his career in GAO's San Francisco office and served overseas in the agency's former European office as well. Since 2003, he has directed GAO reviews on a wide range of U.S. Government operations and programs in the international arena to assist the Congress in carrying out its oversight responsibilities.

His contributions have been recognized with numerous GAO awards, including a meritorious service award and an assistant comptroller general award. Without objection, the witness' written statement will be made a part of the record and Mr. Courts is recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MICHAEL COURTS, ACTING DIRECTOR,  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRADE, GOVERNMENT AC-  
COUNTABILITY OFFICE**

Mr. COURTS. Good morning Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Berman and members of the committee. I am pleased to be here this morning to discuss diplomatic security challenges at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas.

This testimony is primarily based on a 2009 GAO report on challenges facing State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security. It is also based on subsequent work that GAO performed to follow up on the recommendations in that report.

This work is part of a series of GAO engagements to review the State Department's efforts to secure our people and property at diplomatic locations worldwide.

GAO was asked to testify this morning on the growth of Diplomatic Security's mission and resources in recent years and some of the key challenges that the Bureau faces in executing its work.

The primary message of my testimony this morning is that Diplomatic Security's mission has grown substantially over the past decade and the Bureau's funding and personnel have increased considerably as a result.

Despite these increased resources, however, the Bureau faces a number of operational challenges. State is maintaining missions in increasingly dangerous locations. Staffing shortages as well as other operational challenges tax the Bureau's ability to implement its mission. And finally, State has expanded Diplomatic Security without the benefit of adequate strategic planning.

My first point is that Diplomatic Security's mission and resources have grown considerably over the past decade in reaction to a num-

ber of security incidents. From 1998 to 2009, there were 39 attacks on embassies, consulates, or official U.S. personnel, beginning with the 1998 attacks against the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

In conjunction with its expanding mission, the Bureau's budget increased nearly tenfold from 1998 to 2008. The size of its direct hire workforce doubled during that period and its reliance on contractors increased dramatically as well.

My second point is that despite these increased resources, the Bureau faces a number of challenges. First, State is maintaining missions in increasingly dangerous locations. The missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, have required an extraordinary level of security resources on the part of State and even more so after the military withdrew from Iraq in late 2011.

State is also maintaining an increasing number of other dangerous posts, such as in Pakistan and Yemen and Libya, where the security situations are such that State would have previously evacuated such posts.

Despite the Bureau's considerable staff growth, some offices have been operating with severe staffing shortages. In 2008, for example, approximately a third of Diplomatic Security's domestic sub offices operated with a vacancy rate of 25 percent or higher, affecting their ability to conduct the work and leading to backlogs and training gaps.

We found other operational challenges as well. For example, we found that 53 percent of regional security officers didn't speak or read foreign languages at the proficiency level required by their positions.

My final point is that diplomatic security's tremendous growth has been more reactive than strategic. While State's strategic plan identifies some security priorities and goals, it doesn't fully implement our recommendation to identify the resources needed to meet those goals or to address the management challenges we identified in our work.

In summary, Diplomatic Security's mission and resources have grown tremendously over the past decade. Despite these increased resources, the Bureau faces a number of operational challenges, and State hasn't fully implemented our recommendation to conduct a strategic review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure that its missions and activities address the department's priority needs as well as the challenges that we identified in our work.

Madam Chairman and Ranking Member Berman, this concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Courts follows:]

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United States Government Accountability Office

**GAO**

Testimony  
Before the House Committee on  
Foreign Affairs

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For Release on Delivery  
Expected at 10:00 a.m. EST  
Thursday, November 15, 2012

**STATE DEPARTMENT**

**Diplomatic Security  
Challenges**

Statement of Michael J. Courts, Acting Director  
International Affairs and Trade







United States Government Accountability Office  
Washington, DC 20548

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Berman, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to be here to discuss diplomatic security challenges at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas. The U.S. government maintains more than 270 diplomatic posts, including embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic offices, in about 180 countries worldwide. More than 80,000 U.S. government employees work overseas under Chief of Mission authority, representing more than 30 agencies and government entities.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1998 embassy attacks in East Africa, U.S. civilian officials posted overseas have faced increasing threats to their safety and security, and facilities in high threat locations have faced numerous attacks. In September, the U.S. consulate compound in Benghazi, Libya, was breached and sustained mortar fire. Tragically, the U.S. Ambassador and three other U.S. officials were killed.

My testimony today is primarily based on a GAO report that was issued in November 2009, examining the Department of State's (State) Bureau of Diplomatic Security (Diplomatic Security).<sup>2</sup> The Bureau's mission, to ensure a safe environment for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, involves activities such as the protection of people, information, and property overseas, and dignitary protection and passport and visa fraud investigations domestically. My testimony also includes work we have subsequently performed to follow up on the implementation of the report's recommendations. I will discuss (1) the growth of Diplomatic Security's missions and resources, (2) the challenges Diplomatic Security faces in conducting its work, and (3) the status of GAO's recommendation concerning Diplomatic Security.

Detailed information on our scope and methodology can be found in the reports cited in appendix I. We conducted the underlying performance audits in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audits

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<sup>1</sup>Agencies represented overseas include the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and Treasury, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

<sup>2</sup>GAO, *State Department: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, GAO-10-158 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 12, 2009).

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to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

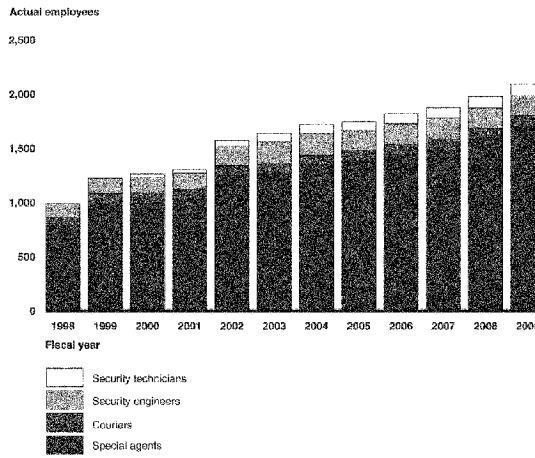
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### Diplomatic Security's Mission and Resources Have Grown Considerably Since 1998

Diplomatic Security's mission and the resources needed to carry it out have grown substantially since 1998. Following the 1998 embassy bombings in Africa, Diplomatic Security determined that many U.S. diplomatic facilities did not meet its security standards and were vulnerable to terrorist attack. Diplomatic Security added many of the physical security measures currently in place at most U.S. missions worldwide, such as additional barriers, alarms, public address systems, and enhanced access procedures. From 1998 to 2009, there were 39 attacks aimed at U.S. Embassies, Consulates, or Chief of Mission personnel (not including regular attacks against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad since 2004). The nature of some of these attacks led Diplomatic Security to further adapt its security measures. Moreover, the attacks of September 11, 2001, underscored the importance of upgrading Diplomatic Security's domestic security programs and enhancing its investigative capacity. Furthermore, following the onset of U.S. operations in Iraq in 2003, Diplomatic Security has had to provide security in the Iraq and other hostile environments such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Diplomatic Security funding and personnel increased considerably in conjunction with its expanding mission. Diplomatic Security reports that its budget increased from about \$200 million in 1998 to \$1.8 billion in 2008. In addition, the size of Diplomatic Security's workforce doubled between 1998 and 2009. For example, the number of security specialists (special agents, engineers, technicians, and couriers) increased from under 1,000 in 1998 to over 2,000 in 2009, (see fig. 1). At the same time, Diplomatic Security has increased its use of contractors to support its security operations worldwide, specifically through increases in the Diplomatic Security guard force (with over 35,000 guards in Fiscal Year 2011) and the use of contractors to provide protective details for American diplomats in high-threat environments.

**Figure 1: Growth of Security Specialist Workforce: 1998-2009**



Source: GAO analysis of State data.

**Dangerous Environments, Staffing Shortages, Other Operational Limitations, and Reactive Planning Challenge Diplomatic Security**

Diplomatic Security faces several policy and operational challenges. First, State is maintaining missions in increasingly dangerous locations, necessitating the use of more security resources and making it more difficult to provide security in these locations. Second, although Diplomatic Security has grown considerably in staff, staffing shortages, as well as other operational challenges, further tax Diplomatic Security's ability to implement its mission. Finally, State has expanded Diplomatic Security without the benefit of adequate strategic planning.

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Maintaining Missions in Dangerous Environments Significantly Affects Diplomatic Security's Work

Keeping staff secure, yet productive, in Iraq has been one of Diplomatic Security's greatest challenges in recent years. The U.S. mission in Baghdad is the largest in the world. As of May 2012, the United States was planning for a presence of 11,500 personnel at 11 diplomatic sites. Between fiscal years 2004 and 2008, Diplomatic Security operations in Iraq required approximately 36 percent of Diplomatic Security's entire budget. To support security operations in Iraq, Diplomatic Security had to draw staff and resources away from other programs. In 2009, we reported that Diplomatic Security's workload—and thus its resource requirements—would likely increase as the U.S. military transitioned out of Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. policymakers' focus on Afghanistan poses another significant challenge for Diplomatic Security. The security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated between 2005 and 2010 and has remained relatively dangerous since.

In addition to operating in the Iraq and Afghanistan, State is maintaining missions in an increasing number of other dangerous posts—such as Peshawar, Pakistan, and Sana'a, Yemen—some of which State would have previously evacuated. The policy to maintain a presence in dangerous areas began with State's 2006 transformational diplomacy initiative, which required a shift of human resources to increasingly critical regions such as Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East. According to Diplomatic Security officials, maintaining missions in these dangerous environments requires more resources.

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Some Diplomatic Security Offices Operated with Severe Staff Shortages

Despite Diplomatic Security's staff growth since 1998, some offices were operating with severe staffing shortages. In 2008, approximately one-third of Diplomatic Security's domestic suboffices operated with a vacancy rate of 25 percent or higher. Several offices reported that this shortage of staff affected their ability to conduct their work, leading to backlogged cases and training gaps.

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<sup>3</sup>GAO, *Iraq: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight*, GAO-09-294SP (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 24, 2009). Further in June 2012, we reported that Iraq continued to require extraordinary funding to provide additional security capabilities. See GAO, *Mission Iraq: State and DOD Face Challenges in Finalizing Support and Security Capabilities*, GAO-12-655T (Washington, D.C.: Jun. 28, 2012).

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State officials attributed these shortages to three factors:

- *Staffing the Iraq mission:* In order to provide enough Diplomatic Security special agents in Iraq, we reported that Diplomatic Security had to move agents from other programs, and those moves affected the agency's ability to perform other missions, including providing security for visiting dignitaries and visa, passport, and identity fraud investigations.
- *Protection details:* Diplomatic Security draws agents from field offices, headquarters, and overseas posts to participate in protective details and special events, such as the Olympics. Diplomatic Security's role in providing protection at such major events has grown and will require more staff.
- *Normal rotations:* Staff take home leave between overseas postings and are sometimes required to take training before starting their next assignment. This rotation process regularly creates periodic staffing gaps, which affects Diplomatic Security's ability to meet its increased security demands.

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Other Operational Challenges Impeded Diplomatic Security's Ability to Fully Implement Its Mission and Activities

Diplomatic Security faced a number of other operational challenges that impeded it from fully implementing its mission and activities, including:

- *Inadequate buildings:* State is in the process of updating and building many new facilities. However, we have previously identified many posts that did not meet all security standards delineated by the Overseas Security Policy Board and the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999.
- *Foreign language deficiencies:* In 2009, we found that 53 percent of Regional Security Officers do not speak and read foreign languages at the level required by their positions, and we concluded that these language shortfalls could be negatively affecting several aspects of U.S. diplomacy, including security operations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>For GAO's review of language training at State, see GAO, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*, GAO-09-355 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 17, 2009).

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- *Experience gaps:* Thirty-four percent of Diplomatic Security's positions (not including those in Baghdad) were filled with officers below the position's grade. For example, several Assistant Regional Security Officers with whom we met were in their first overseas positions and stated that they did not feel adequately prepared for their job, particularly their responsibility to manage large security contracts.
  - *Host country laws:* At times, host country laws prohibit Diplomatic Security from taking all the security precautions it would like outside an embassy. For example, Diplomatic Security officials said that they prefer to arm their local guard forces and their special agents; however, several countries prohibit this. In cases of attack, this prohibition limits Diplomatic Security's ability to protect an embassy or consulate.
  - *Balancing security with the diplomatic mission:* Diplomatic Security's desire to provide the best security possible for State's diplomatic corps has, at times, been in tension with State's diplomatic mission. For example, Diplomatic Security has established strict policies concerning access to U.S. facilities that usually include both personal and vehicle screening. Some public affairs officials—whose job it is to foster relations with host country nationals—have expressed concerns that these security measures discourage visitors from attending U.S. Embassy events or exhibits. In addition, the new embassies and consulates, with their high walls, deep setbacks, and strict screening procedures, have evoked the nickname "Fortress America."

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Although Some Planning Initiatives Have Been Undertaken, Diplomatic Security's Growth Has Been More Reactive than Strategic

We found in 2009 that neither State's departmental strategic plan nor Diplomatic Security's bureau strategic plan specifically addresses its resource needs or its management challenges. Diplomatic Security's substantial growth since 1998 has been reactive and has not benefited from adequate strategic guidance. For example, State's strategic plan does not specifically address Diplomatic Security's resource needs or management challenges. While State's strategic plan for 2007-2012 has a section identifying security priorities and goals, we found it did not identify the resources needed to meet these goals or address all of the management challenges we identified in this report. Diplomatic Security had undertaken some planning efforts at the bureau and office level, but we found that these efforts also had limitations.

Several senior Diplomatic Security officials noted that Diplomatic Security was reactive in nature, stating a number of reasons for its lack of long-

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term strategic planning. For example, Diplomatic Security provides a support function and must react to the needs of State; therefore, it cannot plan its own resources until State determines overall policy direction. Also, while State has a 5-year workforce plan that addresses all bureaus, officials stated that Diplomatic Security did not use this plan to determine its staffing needs.

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### Status of GAO's Recommendation for Executive Action

In our 2009 report, we recommended that the Secretary of State—as either part of a State management initiative, the Quadrennial Diplomatic and Development Review (QDDR) or as a separate initiative—conduct a strategic review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure that its mission and activities address State's priority needs. We stated that this review should also address key human capital and operational challenges faced by Diplomatic Security. At the time, State agreed with our recommendation and noted that, although it was not planning to perform a strategic review of the full Diplomatic Security mission and capabilities in the QDDR, the Department was committed to ensuring that Diplomatic Security's mission would benefit from this initiative.

We have subsequently learned that State has not yet conducted the strategic review as recommended. Specifically, Diplomatic Security officials told GAO that the QDDR was not used to conduct such a review. However, Diplomatic Security officials did point to several steps they had taken, including the creation of a Strategic Planning Unit and other efforts to enhance performance management. Diplomatic Security officials also noted that they have undertaken a new effort in response to the rapidly changing security environment encountered over the past year by bringing together subject matter experts from across Diplomatic Security to support scenario planning for future security requirements. We appreciate the steps that the Bureau has taken on its own initiative; however we continue to believe that the Department, and not the Bureau, needs to take action in order to strategically assess the competing demands on Diplomatic Security and the resulting mission implications.

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Madam Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you or other Members of the Committee may have at this time.

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**GAO Contact and  
Staff  
Acknowledgement**

For questions regarding this testimony, please contact Michael Courts at (202) 512-8980 or [courtsm@gao.gov](mailto:courtsm@gao.gov). Individuals making key contributions to this testimony include Anthony Moran, Miriam Carroll Fenton, Thomas Costa, Karen Deans, Jon C. Fremont, Valérie Nowak, Kira Self, and Christina Werth.



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## Related GAO Reports

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*Overseas Rightsizing: State Has Improved the Consistency of Its Approach, but Does Not Follow Up on Its Recommendations.* GAO-12-799. Washington, D.C.: July 25, 2012.

*Department of State: Foreign Service Midlevel Staffing Gaps Persist Despite Significant Increases in Hiring.* GAO-12-721. Washington, D.C.: June 14, 2012.

*Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Effort.* GAO-11-780T. Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2011.

*Diplomatic Security: Expanded Missions and Inadequate Facilities Pose Critical Challenges to Training Efforts.* GAO-11-460. Washington, D.C.: June 1, 2011.

*New Embassy Compounds: State Faces Challenges in Sizing Facilities and Providing for Operations and Maintenance Requirements.* GAO-10-689. Washington, D.C.: July 20, 2010.

*State Department: Challenges Facing the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.* GAO-10-290T. Washington, D.C.: December 9, 2009.

*State Department: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review.* GAO-10-156. Washington, D.C.: November 12, 2009.

*Department of State: Additional Steps Needed to Address Continuing Staffing and Experience Gaps at Hardship Posts.* GAO-09-874. Washington, D.C.: September 17, 2009.

*Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls.* GAO-09-955. Washington, D.C.: September 17, 2009.

*Combating Terrorism: State Department's Antiterrorism Program Needs Improved Guidance and More Systematic Assessments of Outcomes.* GAO-08-336. Washington, D.C.: February 29, 2008.

*Diplomatic Security: Upgrades Have Enhanced Security, but Site Conditions Prevent Full Adherence to Standards.* GAO-08-162. Washington, D.C.: January 18, 2008.

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Related GAO Reports

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*State Department: Evacuation Planning and Preparations for Overseas Posts Can Be Improved.* GAO-08-23. Washington, D.C.: October 19, 2007.

*Overseas Security: State Department has Not Fully Implemented Key Measures to Protect U.S. Officials from Terrorist Attacks Outside of Embassies.* GAO-05-642. Washington, D.C.: May 9, 2005.

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Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Courts.

And I will begin the questioning. You said in your written testimony that while Diplomatic Security officials had taken steps to enhance performance management, they had not yet conducted the review that GAO recommended in 2009.

How would a strategic review help the State Department with its Diplomatic Security mission to be ready for attacks after Benghazi? And one of the questions that I raised in my opening statement is, how do you believe that the State Department should reevaluate the risk-assessment process for other vulnerable U.S. sites overseas as a result of the Benghazi attack?

Mr. COURTS. Thank you.

I would start by saying, as long as the department continues to levy missions on the Bureau of Diplomatic Security without regard to how it fits into overall departmental strategic planning and what the resource implications of those missions are, Diplomatic Security because, it is a support function will salute smartly and attempt to fulfill the mission, whether they have the resources required or not.

So we think it is critically important that the department involve the Bureau of Diplomatic Security on a strategic level in their planning to look at the missions that they are requiring, to rationalize those missions, to look at the resources that are required for those and to make some honest and tough trade-offs about whether they can accomplish the mission within those resource constraints or whether they need to adjust the mission.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, you discussed the dangerous posts, Egypt and Yemen, what are the critical components of any reassessment regarding attacks against Benghazi and all of those trouble spots on 9/11 and ensuing days and weeks?

Mr. COURTS. Well, first of all, the work that we did found that there were a number of areas where the capabilities of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security were not where they should have been, and I mentioned some of the staffing shortages. Over a third of their offices, for example, domestically that had over 25 percent vacancy rates; that means that work is not getting done in those offices, in some cases, or it is not getting done as quickly as it should be done. It also means that training is not being achieved for the agents in those offices, which ultimately affects the readiness at overseas posts when those agents rotate overseas.

I mentioned foreign language deficiencies. That is an area that needs to be addressed as well. As a matter of fact, we found in some of our field work, at a post of strategic importance to the United States, a security officer received a telephone call from an informant and transferred that call to a locally employed staff person at the Embassy because she didn't speak the language. That could have compromised the informant's identity; it could have even threatened the informant's life. So it is critically important that they have those language skills.

We also found experience gaps. Over a third of the officers in positions overseas were at grade levels below that which was designated for those positions. That means that those officers didn't feel as prepared to carry out those duties as they would like to have been. It also means that managers, leaders are distracted

from their more strategic responsibilities to have to train those people and bring them up to speed. So there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed, and again, we think it all comes back to strategic planning at the departmental level.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Well, thank you very much.

I yield back the balance of my time, and I hope that all of our members are able to read the thorough report from GAO.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Mr. BERMAN is recognized for his questioning.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Mr. COURTS, you said, in 2008, 25 percent of the Diplomatic Security positions in our different posts were unfilled. Do I understand you correctly?

Mr. COURTS. In 2008, over a third of the domestic sub offices of Diplomatic Security had vacancy rates of 25 percent or higher.

Mr. BERMAN. Oh, over a third. That is different. Over a third of the posts had vacancy rates of 25 percent or higher.

Mr. COURTS. The domestic posts, not the overseas posts.

Mr. BERMAN. Oh. That is very different. Forget that.

Moving on.

I am curious, though, this comment about strategic review, in the 2009 report, it says Diplomatic Security stated that it fills all positions in Iraq and Afghanistan before filling any other positions. That sounds like a strategic position. I mean, that is a broad conclusion that I guess the administration made, State made, Diplomatic Security made, about how to fill posts.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct. Diplomatic Security does fill the most critical positions first, especially in places like Iraq, before they fill other positions. As I mentioned, they will try to address life and death situations, and they make that their first priority, and rightly so.

The problem is that they are often robbing Peter to pay Paul. And I mentioned, for example, those domestic offices. The problem with taking people from those domestic offices and putting them overseas is that there is other critical work that is not being done in those domestic offices. For example, passport and visa fraud investigations, and of course, getting that work wrong has lethal consequences as well.

Mr. BERMAN. Just to make sure we understand, an unfilled position is a position for which there are appropriations; it is not a request. It is not a plan. The item has been funded to the level that would fund all the positions including the unfilled ones.

Mr. COURTS. It is not a requested position. It is an authorized position.

Mr. BERMAN. Authorized and funded?

Mr. COURTS. Whether it is funded adequately or not, I can't speak to that.

Mr. BERMAN. I would like to turn to the contractors issue. Resources for protection of our diplomats abroad, as you mentioned, have been stressed by operations in the two war zones and higher counterterrorism threats. In addition to the filling of permanent positions, we have massively increased our reliance on contractor, contract personnel. Part of the argument is it can save costs by not having to pay pensions, et cetera.

Given the ongoing and long-term nature of these threats against our diplomats, is this practice sustainable? How is State properly overseeing these contracts? To your way of thinking, is there something in the effort to save that money, are we losing some of our protection by relying on contractors?

Mr. COURTS. The GAO work that we did in 2009 did not directly address that issue. I would say that when I mentioned that some of the staff that are Diplomatic Security staff, the direct hire staff, that were put in positions overseas, were contractors to manage those staff told us in our field work that they did not have the skills, did not have the training to properly manage contractor staff, so there are risks there.

Mr. BERMAN. And then if I can get this last question in, how do we address these shortages? How should diplomatic security prioritize staffing requirements?

Mr. COURTS. We think that the department needs to, at a departmental level, take a strategic look at rationalizing the Bureau's mission. The Bureau itself isn't in a position to do that because, as I said, they are a support function. So if they are told they need to provide security for a post like Benghazi or anywhere else, they are going to salute smartly and try to carry out that mission.

What the department needs to do is take a look at all of the enormous mission responsibilities that diplomatic security has accrued over the last 10 years or so and take a look at whether they have got the resources to actually carry out all those missions. They may need to make hard decisions. They may need to consider whether they need to close some posts in order to be able to adequately staff others.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Courts.

And thank you, Mr. Berman.

Mr. Smith is recognized.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Courts, thank you for your testimony and for the great work that GAO does on just about everything, so thank you so much for this.

Let me ask you a couple of questions, Deputy Assistant Secretary Lamb said that there were the correct number of assets in Benghazi at the time of 9/11. She testified that budget considerations played no part in considering additional security.

And I assume that part of those assets had to have been the local militia, the 17th February brigade, the local armed militia, which reportedly received monetary compensation and training from U.S. officials and were part of the protection force.

My question first is, how adequate are these militias? Has GAO looked at that? How often do we use militias, as opposed to a central force or armed forces from a country?

Secondly, if I could, I have been a big fan for most of my career of best value contracting. And unfortunately, except for Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, best value is not used to award contracts to the technically acceptable firm offering lowest evaluated price, low bid, in essence, and I am wondering if that type of process has led to including those protection assets that are inferior.

Best value is something I have been pushing at DoD for years, especially as it relates to my local military base, known as joint

base. They go with low bids so often and get a shoddy product as a direct result. It seems to me best value is something to look at it, if you can comment on that as well.

And finally, in your comments you do point out that we previously had identified many posts that did not meet all security standards delineated by the overseas security policy board and the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999. I note, parenthetically, I am the prime author of the Secure Embassy Construction and Counterterrorism Act of 1999, and I would like to know, if in looking at that, whether or not our consulate in Benghazi fell short of the security standards that were proscribed by that act as well as by the Overseas Security Policy Board.

Mr. COURTS. Thank you.

With respect to Benghazi, GAO does not have any information on the specific security arrangements at the consulate in Benghazi, and hopefully, the ongoing investigations by State, the FBI and others and also as a result of these Congressional hearings will help us understand what happened there, what lessons are to be drawn there. We do know from past work that State considers the likely threats that a post will face and its physical security posture when it makes those arrangements. But I would have to defer to the Department of State on what those actual security arrangements were in Benghazi.

With respect to the contracting issue, we did not address that as part of this body of work. We do have specialists in GAO that have looked at contracting in contingency environments like Iraq, and I would be happy to put you in touch with those people to share their findings with you on that.

In terms of the standards, the security standards at embassies, as you know, not all of State's overseas facilities meet their own security standards. Obviously, the newer the Embassy, the more likely they are to meet those standards. They have programs in place to try to upgrade and retrofit existing and older embassies to try to mitigate some of the deficiencies there. But clearly, the more people we can get into the newer, more robust facilities, the safer our people are going to be.

I don't know whether or not the facility in Benghazi met those standards, but that is a question that should probably be asked.

Mr. SMITH. Could you pose that as well? Could you look into that as well, whether or not the Benghazi consulate met that standard? It seems to me it would be a very good line of inquiry for GAO.

Mr. COURTS. Thank you. I would say that there are a lot of questions that have arisen from the incident in Libya that have ramifications for our presence around the world, and GAO stands ready to assist the Congress and this committee in addressing that work.

Mr. SMITH. If you could take that back thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Smith.

I was going to recognize Mr. Sires of New Jersey, so I will go to Ms. Bass—no, then I will go to Mr. Sherman.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

I want to address this idea that somehow the confusion as to whether this was mostly a planned attack with some ad hoc help or an ad hoc demonstration with terrorists coming in or somewhere



along that spectrum is somehow part of some intentional effort to mislead the American public for political reasons.

If you take the view that this was a carefully planned attack, you would come away with the view that there are terrorists organized in Benghazi, something we all knew to be true before and after the Benghazi attack.

If you take the position that there were people off the streets who were angry at us and willing to take violent action against us, then you would say our public diplomacy efforts in the Middle East have not been entirely successful, and there are hundreds of thousands of people with great anger toward the United States.

I know of no political plan, nor could I conceive of one, that would ever be successful in trying to convince the American people that either of these problems weren't there, that our policy in the Middle East had been so successful that either all organized terrorist groups had been eliminated or that all public anger against America had been eliminated.

Mr. COURTS, are you aware of any evidence of an intentional effort to mislead the American people about what happened in those terrible hours in Benghazi?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, the GAO's work did not address that issue. I am not in a position to answer that.

Mr. SHERMAN. I understand.

Focusing on future security measures, what types of lessons do you think will emerge from this current attack? Will those who mean us harm learn lessons as to how to attack us and as a result of, I realize, what is an incomplete review of what happened in Benghazi, what else should we be doing either with the physical facilities, the decision on where to have our diplomats or the number of security personnel to have or the number or the types of weapons that they should have with them on a regular basis?

Mr. COURTS. Thank you, Congressman. I think it is still too early to know exactly what lessons are to be drawn from Benghazi, with respect to, for example, whether it is a risk-assessment issue, whether it is a capabilities issue, whether it is an information-sharing issue, we just don't know yet, but GAO does stand ready to assist, as I said, Congress in pursuing those issues going forward.

Mr. SHERMAN. We have a Foreign Service that is in dangerous places today. We, as a country, need to decide how much danger to expose our people to. We can never have them entirely safe in places like Benghazi, under—with an American flag on top of the building. And I would ask your comment, but it is really more a decision for this committee to determine the extent to which we put our Ambassadors and other Foreign Service personnel at risk and evaluate what the benefits are of having somebody today in Yemen, what are the difficulties of not have been having somebody in Damascus, and when is it worth having somebody in Benghazi? I don't know, Mr. Courts, whether you have any comments or insight on that?

Mr. COURTS. I would say I would agree, first, that there is no way that our diplomats will ever be at zero risk. As long as the United States seeks to engage foreign governments and further U.S. foreign policy interests abroad, our diplomats will inherently be at risk. And as we saw with al-Qaeda linked attacks in Nairobi

and Dar es Salaam and more recently, obviously, with the attacks in Libya, those who would seek to do harm to Americans have plenty of targets to choose from. But to mitigate that, State needs to have the capability in place to address those threats, and as I mentioned, we found in our work where there are a number of areas where those capabilities, frankly, were not where they should be.

Mr. SHERMAN. I would just say that we really have to rely on the host government to a great extent, especially from an organized attack. And I don't know whether if we had had three or four more people on the ground, whether we would be talking about no American casualties or eight American casualties.

And I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana is recognized.

Mr. BURTON. First of all, I am not going to attack the White House, the administration.

What I want to do is point to some of the what I consider malfeasance at the State Department. There were over a couple of hundred different kinds of incidents during the last year. But I want to focus on just some of the more important ones. On April the 11th, 2012, a gun battle between an unidentified armed group and forces loyal to the transitional national council occurred near the consulate in Benghazi. The gun battle included use of anti-aircraft guns and RPGs. This was back in April.

In May, two RPG rounds were fired at the Benghazi office of the International Committee of the Red Cross, approximately 1 kilometer from the consulate in Benghazi.

In June 2012, Ambassador Stevens, who normally took morning runs around Tripoli along with members of his security detail, according to sources, they were posting his picture and talking about when he was running so he might be a target.

On June the 6th of 2012, under the cover of darkness, assailants placed an IED on the north gate of the consulate in Benghazi, blowing a hole in the security perimeter that was described by one individual big enough for 40 people, 40 men to go through.

On June 10, 2012, a two-car convoy carrying the British Ambassador was attacked in broad daylight with an RPG. And the British consulate then closed their consulate there.

Late June 2012, the International Committee of the Red Cross was attacked again. They closed down the Red Cross office there.

And weeks before the September 11th attack on our compound in Benghazi, unarmed Libyan guards employed by the British contractor Blue Mountain Group were being warned, warned by their family members, to quit their jobs guarding the consulate in Benghazi because there were rumors that there was going to be an impending attack. Now that sounds like to me you ought to be concerned about that.

Now let's go back and talk about the people who were making decisions and who were in charge. Mr. Nordstrom was the regional director, regional director for security. This guy knew what was going on. He was there. And he contacted the people back at the headquarters in Washington, at the State Department, and here is one of the things that was said. He said, you know, we really need

to do something. He is concerned there has only been one incident involving an American, but he was struck by fire. And the take away from that and for me and my staff, this is what somebody said back at the headquarters of the State Department, and here is what Nordstrom said, the guy that was in charge of the security there. The take away from that for me and my staff was abundantly clear; we were not going to get resources until the aftermath of an incident.

And the question that we would ask again, and this is what he asked of State back at the headquarters here in Washington, how thin does the ice have to get before someone falls through? So he warned them that.

Now Mr. Wood, the lieutenant colonel in charge of the unit there that was for security, here is what he had to say: We were fighting a losing battle. We couldn't even keep up with what we had. We were not even allowed to keep what we had.

And then Mr. Nordstrom, once again, when he talked to State here in Washington, they said to him when he asked for more security, you are asking for the sun the moon and the stars. And his response was to the man he was talking to at State, Jim, do you know what the most frustrating thing about this assignment is? It is not the hardship. It is not the gunfire. It is not the threats. It is dealing and fighting against the people, programs and personnel who are supposed to be supporting me back at State. And I added it by saying, for me, listen to this, for me, the Taliban is on the inside of the building.

Now they have said time and time and time again that there was a security problem. There were incidents of attack. The Red Cross closed down their office in June. The British consulate closed down their office in June. We were attacked. There were threats all the way up to weeks before the attack on September the 11th, and the people back at State here in Washington continued to deny additional security, and they continued to do away with security that was already there.

Now, to me, that shows incompetence. To me, that shows that the people at State ought to be re-evaluated who were involved in this. And I'm talking about Ms. Lamb, and I am talking about—let me see who else it is—Mr. Kennedy. Those people who were in the decision-making process ought to be taken to task, and I have talked to him on a number of cases, and I am not going to go into the security meetings we have had. But what they have said does not comport with what was said at our Government Reform hearing.

So I think this committee, Madam Chairman, ought to bring lieutenant Colonel Wood and Ms. Lamb before our committee to find out why there are inconsistencies between what we are hearing now and what we heard back when we had that other hearing.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. I am sorry, Mr. Burton, I had not noticed that the clock had run.

Mr. Ackerman is recognized. He is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Let's just hang the guilty parties.

You know, the stench of hypocrisy that hangs over this city today emanates from this room. I have listened, and I did come here to

try to learn—but I have listened to my colleagues talk about the President of the United States and others in the administration using terms as “deliberate lies,” “unmitigated gall,” “malfeasance,” which is the malicious and knowing evildoing, “disgust,” “cover-ups,” asking questions of who is responsible in this town for what happened?

But if you want to know who is responsible in this town, buy yourself a mirror. Those of us who have been to these hearings and briefings and markups hear time and time again from our colleagues that this costs too much money, and we have to make cuts. Well, our evil-doing American-citizen-hating administration requested a lot more money than we provided.

They requested for worldwide security \$440 million more than you guys wanted to provide, \$0.25 billion in security upgrades that you refused to make in this committee, and then you have the audacity to come here and say why wasn't the protection of these people provided for?

And the answer is because you damn didn't provide it. You reduced what the administration asked for to protect these people. And the answer to the question is, how do you protect these people? It costs money, believe it or not. Whether they needed more sophisticated weaponry paid for at a bigger price or not doesn't matter. They didn't have the wherewithal or the personnel.

And some of you keep referring to it as a consulate, which I would advise you costs a lot more money than the temporary mission facility that it actually was, more money that you refused to provide.

Ask not who the guilty party is; it is you. It is us. It is this committee. And the things that we insist that we need have to cost money.

Now, Mr. Courts, you are not just some bumpkin off the street who wound up here today. If you increased two people, who are security people, making an assumption that all security people cost the same amount of money—we do pay them in money right?

Mr. COURTS. Yes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If you increase from two to five, as a former math teacher, it suggests to me that that is a 150 percent increase from two to five. Is that accurate?

Mr. COURTS. Yes, sir.

Mr. ACKERMAN. So if we went from two to five, if that was the right number, it would cost 150 percent more than this committee was willing to provide. Is that accurate? Assuming they all got paid equally.

Mr. COURTS. It would have cost more money.

Mr. ACKERMAN. That is hedge, but that is okay. Could you tell me which of my colleagues on this committee was as bodacious in their insistence that we provide more money for American security in the State Department budget, I would appreciate it.

And if any of my colleagues and I might have missed you and I apologize for overlooking, made that insistence that we give more State Department, please raise your hand, and I will yield to you.

Six, five, four, three, two, one. Your time has expired.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Your time has expired, Mr. Ackerman.

And we are so pleased to yield to Mr. Rohrabacher, the chairman on the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. And again, Madam Chairman, thank you for your leadership over the years to make sure the American people get the straight story.

And yes, I think that there is a smell of hypocrisy in politics here. Let's start by making sure that we go on the record again so that all may hear this, the last, my last colleague's statement notwithstanding, the lady who made, the official, I should say, happens to be a lady, who made the decision at State Department at what level of spending would be spent for security for the Benghazi consulate testified under oath that there was no budget consideration whatsoever in her decision—under oath. Anyone suggesting otherwise should not be pointing fingers of hypocrisy at this side of the aisle.

Yes. This is not simply a cover up of a third-rate burglary. We have four of our diplomatic personnel dead, and it is not a McCarthy-era tactic to demand accountability and to demand that the American people are not misinformed about it to the point that they don't know what the threat is.

So I ask this witness the level of security in Libya that has been determined, have you determined that it was, that there was a deficiency because of cost and that the decisions made to provide a level of security had anything to do with budget considerations? Are you contradicting Ms. Lamb's testimony in other words?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, GAO doesn't have any specific information about the security arrangements in Benghazi. We have not done that work.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay. Has GAO found, it is very difficult not to notice that the administration went out of its way for a number of days, at least a week, trying to present the image of this murderer of our diplomats as a crowd that went out of control because of movie rage, of some being upset about a misportrayal or a portrayal of Mohamed in a movie, that, of course, by insisting on presenting that as the evidence, we are downplaying the threat of radical Islam, which is out there and means to hurt us and to hurt Americans and specifically. Has there been any evidence that you have seen that people in this administration have been instructed not to use the words "radical Islamic terrorists"?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, again, I am sorry. We did not address that issue in this work. I can speak to the broader problems facing diplomatic security, but we did not address that.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Now, in terms of money for diplomatic security, let's note that this year the State Department has requested \$1.4 billion for worldwide security for its facilities and personnel. In addition, they have requested \$215 million for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. That comes to \$1.6 billion. At the same time, this administration wants to give Iraq \$850 million to train a police force and \$900 million for military financing, which comes to \$1.7 billion.

How can the Obama administration and members of this committee justify giving more money to Iraq for its security than we are for giving for our protection of our own diplomats? I don't expect you to answer that.

Is there any indication that, during your investigation or your what you have been trying to uncover, is there anything that would suggest that this was not a well organized, murderous hit on an American diplomatic personnel rather than just a crowd that got out of control?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, GAO did not look at the incident specifically in Benghazi, so I can't comment on that.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If it was a crowd that got out of control, was the security enough to handle that alternative?

Mr. COURTS. I can't answer that question either.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let's just, again, note that this is not a budget issue. Those people who are suggesting it is are the ones who have been guilty of trying to politicize this issue, demanding that the American people being given the correct information, rather than intentionally misinformed, is not something that we should tolerate.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Rohrabacher.

And Mr. Faleomavaega, the ranking member on Asia and the Pacific, is recognized.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I just want to say that, as I have mentioned earlier, that the name of Ambassador Stevens, and I think it was somewhat dismissive of me in not realizing that what I consider to be the roll of honor, not only for Ambassador Chris Stevens, Mr. Sean Smith, Mr. Glen Doherty and Mr. Tyrone Woods should be remembered names and not just mentioned as security officers who accompanied Ambassador Stevens. Truly they are true heroes as far as I am concerned.

Mr. Courts, you mentioned that the GAO probably in the past 10 years had given indication that there is a tremendous increase of the needs to provide necessary resources for our Diplomatic Security program. I am curious how many embassies do we have worldwide total and the total number of consulates that we current have right now?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, the combined figure of consulates and embassies, I believe, is somewhere around 270. I don't know what the breakout is between embassies and consulates, but together they are around 270 or so.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I have always been curious how our Government goes about when it, for example, makes a decision to build an Embassy here or there a consulate, and one example that comes to mind, and correct me if I am wrong, didn't we build a more than \$900-million Embassy in Iraq? What was the total cost of that Embassy that we built in Iraq?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I don't have that figure at the top of my head. It was an expensive Embassy, though.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And do we currently have about 1,000 Foreign Service officers servicing that Embassy right now?

Mr. COURTS. I believe that is fairly close to what the figure is.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And could that have been possibly the reason why that some of our Foreign Service officers or the resources of personnel that we had, if they had to be drawn from other consulates and embassies, Iraq is a classic example and that the Liby-

an Embassy and their needs could have been affected because of this.

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I can't speak to whether the Libyan mission was affected by the need for staff in Iraq.

I can say that when we did our work in 2009, we did find that staffing the mission in Iraq did result in staffing shortages in some other locations of Diplomatic Security.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Has there ever been any GAO study or review procedure on how our Government goes about in measuring the kind of embassies that we build in any given country? Is it based on population or is it resources? Obviously, the number of people in Iraq and building a \$900-million Embassy there strikes me as somewhat strange. How do we end up, I can see maybe having an Embassy like that in China or in India, but with Iraq only, what, 20 million people or less? And servicing 1,000 Foreign Service officers? Can you share with us where we are with this?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, GAO has not done any work to address the reasons for the size of the Iraq mission.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Is it because no Members have ever requested that such a review process be taken.

Mr. COURTS. I don't believe they have requested a review with those specific objectives.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. You had also indicated that there were foreign language deficiencies, and some 53 percent of our diplomatic security officers don't speak the foreign language of that host country. How critical is that factor?

Mr. COURTS. It is very important. As I mentioned, we did find examples of where that did degrade their ability to operate in those countries. I mentioned, for example, a local informant in a country of strategic importance to the United States that was handed off to a locally employed staff, and of course, in a country like China, for example, we have to assume that all of the locally employed staff works for the Chinese Government. So that is, obviously, a very problematic thing.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am sorry, but if there is a deficiency of foreign language competency of our Diplomatic Security officers, what about the Foreign Officers themselves? You know, this impression sometimes our Foreign Service officers, and I am not demeaning them, but they come, but they don't really go out and be with the host country people, learning their language perhaps. Don't we have a very comprehensive program teaching our Foreign Service officers how to speak that foreign language?

Mr. COURTS. We do. But GAO has found that there are deficiencies across the department, not just in Diplomatic Security in terms of foreign language skills. It is worse in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security than in some other cones within State Department.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. So you suggest Congress needs to do something about it.

Mr. COURTS. I think State Department needs to do something about it. I am in not in a position, sir.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. My time is up.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Royce, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation, and Trade, is recognized.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes, I think that one of the problems for many of us who followed the story from the initial attack was simply that when we saw the attack, and we noticed that an al-Qaeda affiliate had taken credit for the attack, it just seemed at odds with the report about the attack being spontaneous, the report that it was an outcome of a protest that spun out of control, and the fact in five news shows that argument was put out there and then, 8 days later, that argument was still being debated, it just seemed rather fantastic to those of us who were following what was going on, had gone on, on the ground.

And the concern for me, and I am glad you are here, Mr. Courts, one of my concerns is the emphasis that we put on security because when I read your report, you say that security is treated as a support function at the department.

In your work, you found that these security issues are getting, what, high level attention or lower level attention?

Let me start with that question.

Mr. COURTS. I believe the State Department takes security issues very seriously and certainly—

Mr. ROYCE. I certainly agree with you, but the question is whether that gets top level attention from the Secretary, from top management, or are those issues second- and third-tier issues? Because one of the things that struck me about the original situation on the ground was, as I noted in my opening statement, there was this normalization of relations underway with Libya, and we had assumed that we would go forward with a certain approach that was at odds with our allies.

Usually, as I recall, as I talk to foreign Ambassadors, they say we learn from the United States, and one of the things we do is we make certain that we have security to defend our interests there, and we do not rely on the locals. We make certain in an environment like this that we have security.

It just seems as though in this theater, it was so much out of character with *modus operandi*, with what we have told our allies in the past about how you guarantee security. We are the ones that help teach it. And I just wanted to ask you about that.

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, again, I have to say with respect to the specific security arrangements in Benghazi, GAO's work did not cover that issue. That post didn't actually exist at the time we did our work. I would say, just as a general matter, that the host government in any country, whether it is Libya or anywhere else, according to the Vienna Convention, does have the primary responsibility for protecting our diplomatic missions just as we have that responsibility—

Mr. ROYCE. They do have that primary responsibility. There is no doubt about that. But nevertheless, we tell our allies what you need to do is make sure you have security personnel in place. And it is the fact that a 16-member team in Tripoli were pulled out several months before; it is the fact that we have in our hands the memos from individuals, now deceased, expressing a concern that went unheeded, and we are trying to get our arms around what happened. But also how it would be possible afterwards that this



video narrative was being pushed day after day in the light of facts that just seemed to indicate that, on 9/11, al-Qaeda planned a hit, took credit for it.

And this is why it is important. It weakens our national security. It is important to learn what happened in Benghazi because at the end of the day, it could happen again. Al-Qaeda plans attacks over and over again. And one witness warns that al-Qaeda affiliates will have U.S. embassies in their sites now as a consequence for many years to come. So we really do have to get to the bottom of how this went awry because it seems so much to me out of character in terms of the way that we have taught security for our consulates.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Royce.

Mr. Connolly of Virginia is recognized.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And I thank Mr. Royce for the civil and inquisitive tone of his, how he frames this issue. I think that is proper, and I join with him in wanting to know what happened.

I am sorry our friend from California, our other friend from California, Mr. Rohrabacher takes umbrage at the comparison to McCarthyism. But smear, character assassination, judgment before all the facts are in is McCarthyism.

I have a letter here from one of our colleagues asking people to co-sign declaring that Susan Rice is unfit to be the Secretary of State, our U.N. Ambassador. This is before investigations are completed. This is before this hearing. It is signed the day before. We have apparently made up our mind. That is not an honest inquiry. And that is an attempt to besmirch, in my opinion, the reputation of a very talented and capable public servant.

And I want no part of it. And when we do that, and I understand why Mr. Rohrabacher might be upset, but he invites, not he personally, one invites the kind of reaction you will get from this side of the aisle.

The election is over. The President won reelection. The voices of the public were heard. They want us to cooperate. If you want an honest investigation of this tragedy, we will join you. But if you want to persist in trying to somehow to put this, lay this at the doorstep of the President or the Secretary of State or the United Nations Ambassador, you will find us ready and willing to resist to the teeth.

Reference was made of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing. I was at that hearing. I am a member of that committee. Let me quote under oath what Mr. Nordstrom, the security officer in Tripoli, said. What he said under oath, "Let me say a word about the evening of September 11th. The ferocity and intensity of the attack was nothing we had seen in Libya or that I had seen in my time in the Diplomatic Security Service. Having an extra foot of wall, a dozen guards or agents would not have enabled us to respond to that kind of assault."

He is saying it was unprecedented.

Ryan Crocker today was interviewed, the former two-time Bush Ambassador and one-time Obama Ambassador, and he decried the tone of the discussion about the tragedy of Benghazi here on the

Hill, worried that it was going to have spillover consequences all over the world in terms of Foreign Service. He pointed out the Foreign Service is inherently dangerous in certain circumstances and Libya especially.

I was in Libya in May. Were you there, Mr. Courts?

Mr. COURTS. No, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You didn't go to Libya?

Mr. COURTS. No, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, what I found, and nothing has changed, is the country is not settled. There isn't a domestic peacekeeping force. There isn't some kind of host country group we can rely on to provide security. Surely you know that is true.

Mr. COURTS. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. There are militias all over the place. When I landed in Tripoli, there was a militia, not the government, guarding the airport in Tripoli.

It is an inherently unstable situation. After 40 years of autocratic rule by Qadhafi, it is not settled. Just today, they finally inaugurated a government, but there are still seven key cabinet positions that are vacant. Tragedies happen.

You mentioned, I think, in your testimony, Mr. Courts, that there were 39 incidents of attacks or attempted attacks on U.S. embassies and consulates in some period of time. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I don't know, in the history of the Foreign Service, we have had tragedies, have we not?

Mr. COURTS. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Are they always avoidable?

Mr. COURTS. I can't answer that question. Our work didn't address whether they were avoidable or not.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Some of them might have been; some of them might not have been. Is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is probably correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Finally, I would just say, Madam Chairman, and I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter the full testimony that we received in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection, subject to the limitations.

Mr. CONNOLLY. On page 7 of his testimony, he actually lauds the State Department's response to his request for resources and delineates them in great detail under oath.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Chabot is recognized. He is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Courts, yesterday President Obama held his first news conference since March, now that the election is over of course, and he defended Susan Rice, who clearly misled the American people, saying she shouldn't be criticized for her false statements because she had nothing to do with Benghazi. The logical question this raises is why do they send her out to tell the American people what

happened about Benghazi a person who had nothing to do with Benghazi? Now I assume your GAO report didn't address that.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct, Congressman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. And for weeks, the administration stuck to the story about a video causing the attack on Benghazi, that it was not a terrorist attack, that it was just a spontaneous response to this video, that it arose from street protests, yet in real time, the State Department and others saw that there was no protest going on, that the streets were quiet, and that it was clearly a terrorist attack carried out over a fairly extended period of time. Your GAO report didn't cover that either, I assume?

Mr. COURTS. We did not, Congressman.

Mr. CHABOT. Now, it appears to many Americans that this administration failed to adequately protect U.S. personnel, including a U.S. Ambassador and other—three other very important American citizens, resulting essentially in their deaths in Benghazi, then misled the American people about what happened. I assume the report really didn't go into that area either.

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, no. The work that we conducted, concluded in 2009.

Mr. CHABOT. Let me address a little more specifically then. In other high-risk countries, the State Department uses armed contract forces provided by private security companies to protect our diplomats. It is my understanding that such security personnel were not deployed in Libya, and that is apparently because of objections by Libyan authorities. Could you address that issue?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I don't have any specific information about the security arrangements in Libya.

Mr. CHABOT. It is my understanding that the security personnel oftentimes in local countries may not be up to the same standards that American companies, with our much more experienced and oftentimes better-equipped, et cetera, personnel, are able to bring about in an area. Your report didn't cover that?

Mr. COURTS. We didn't address that issue, Congressman.

Mr. CHABOT. Are you able to address the—some of the differences between the security that was in place in Tripoli, where I was—I was not in Benghazi but in Tripoli, at the Embassy there, in comparison to the consulate or the temporary mission, as Mr. Ackerman referred to it, in Benghazi?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, our work was conducted before those posts existed.

Mr. CHABOT. Relative to the local security forces, rather than American companies or other companies of a similar nature that are protecting our embassies around the world, are you aware of what other embassies we may have locals rather than American companies protecting?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I believe we use, we contract with local companies in quite a few countries around the world for guard services around our embassies and consulates.

Mr. CHABOT. Are you able to comment on any comparisons between the locals versus our folks?

Mr. COURTS. I don't have that information. We didn't address that as part of our report. I could try to get that information for you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. Higgins is recognized.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just to provide some context here, I remember traveling in the summer of 2006 to Lebanon. It was immediately after the Hezbollah-Israeli war, and we had to fly from Cyprus to the United States Embassy in Beirut along the Mediterranean Sea by helicopter. We landed, and the Ambassador at the time Feldman, Ambassador Feldman brought us into the residence, the Ambassador's residence, and he had an ashen look on his face and said that anti-American sentiment is at an all-time high. We later left the residence and drove to a meeting with Prime Minister Siniora to the streets of Beirut, and I was sitting next to the Ambassador, and I asked him if he was okay. He said he would be tomorrow because the United States Marines were doing to dispatch 75 Marines to guard the Embassy, and for the past week and a half, they had been guarded by the Lebanese national army. And his concern was that if they decided to make a move, Hezbollah, which is a violent Shi'a group committed to violent Jihad, on the Embassy, perhaps the Lebanese National Guard's loyalties would be mixed.

I think the point here is that diplomacy is tough work, and it is very, very dangerous work. By definition, diplomats are supposed to mix with the people and mix with the culture, not hide inside the Embassy when things get tough, because the real work and the tough work of diplomats occurs during the toughest times in the most difficult places, like Benghazi.

For the past 40 years, we, the United States, there have been attacks on U.S. diplomatic targets, including 64 under President Bush. There were fewer under Clinton than there were in the first George Bush. There were fewer under the first George Bush than under Reagan, a little bit more under Carter, a little bit fewer under Ford, and a little bit more under President Nixon.

The point is I think what I have heard here consistent with Mr. Ackerman's concern is that we are looking to assign blame rather than looking to find exactly what happened and how we can take actions to protect our diplomats more effectively. And I could easily talk about the budgetary issues and the fact that this Congress rejected the administration's request for over \$400 million more for Embassy security than they received. You hear the assertions of projecting weakness within a political debate or peace through security.

Mr. Ackerman is right; there is a stench of hypocrisy. And if we are serious, if we are serious as a body in trying to protect our diplomats, the world is not getting any easier. It is getting a lot more complicated. It is getting a lot more fouled and confused, and as these places seek to evolve to become more stable, our diplomats are going to continue to be in danger in all of these places.

So I really don't have a question, but I just think the context is important here, and we need to understand that America is the greatest country in the history of the world, and it is because we export our values. And when we as Members of Congress conduct hearings that really don't seem to be intent on getting to the root

of the problem, but rather saying that they are more responsible than we were, I think we do a great disservice to America, to Americans, but more importantly, to America's unique place in the world.

With that, I will yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Wilson of South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I would like to join with my colleagues in thanking the persons of the Foreign Service. It is such remarkable bravery. In fact, an Ambassador who I have grown to respect is Ronald Neumann, who is here today, and I am very grateful for his service in Algeria, Bahrain. I had an opportunity to visit with him in Afghanistan. So I know what an extraordinary challenge it is and the dedicated work that is being done.

Additionally, I think we need to point out that there actually has been—lightning is going to strike—bipartisan cooperation in regard to worldwide security protection, and that is that in 2012, the House increased the funding for the worldwide security protection by almost \$100 million above the 2011 levels, and increased the 2012 funding for Diplomatic Security by \$5 million above the administration's request.

And I appreciate, Mr. Courts, in your report that you indicate that Diplomatic Security has increased its budget by from about \$200 million in 1998 to \$1.8 billion in 2008; additionally, that in 2011, there are 35,000 security guards that are available for Diplomatic Security. Additionally, in 2011–2012, spending bills that were passed by the House—it was bipartisan—there were many Democratic votes for this, and it did pass the Senate and was signed into law by the President, the House did not unilaterally set levels for Embassy and Diplomatic Security. It did not even have the power to do so.

Then that gets to, who makes the determination of the level of protection for each of our facilities?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, that is a decision that is made within the Department of State.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. So it wouldn't be directed by Congress. It would be the priorities of Department of State; is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. With respect to the security arrangements at individual posts, yes, that is correct.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. And based on that, something that is of concern, again, I am confident bipartisan, that there were unclassified cables indicating that there was increasing danger in Benghazi. Was it addressed?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, again, I am sorry, GAO did not address what happened in Benghazi. Our work concluded in 2009, before those posts existed.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. Do you know, even though it concluded prior to the attack, was there any increase of security provided based on Ambassador Stevens' concerns?

Mr. COURTS. Again, Congressman, I am sorry, our work did not address the events in Libya specifically.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. These issues are so important. It really does concern me that Senator Lindsey Graham has pointed out there have been 13 separate letters sent to the Department of Defense, CIA, to the President, asking specific questions that are of great concern to the American people, and in particular great appreciation of our diplomatic personnel, and a concern, too, is proper protection being made. Why would there be a delay of receiving a response from a group of U.S. Senators who are vitally concerned?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I can't speak to that. Our work didn't address it.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. In the future, do you think that there should be a more prompt response so that the American people do understand the dangers that are being faced by our diplomatic personnel?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I would say that we need the details to come out to know what exactly the lessons are that should be drawn from Benghazi. GAO doesn't have those details at this point.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. For so many of us, it was shocking what appeared to be a diversion indicating there was a protest, and then we found out it wasn't a protest. Then it was alleged that it was a protest based on a video, which actually, since it wasn't a protest, it wasn't due to the video. People are really legitimately concerned. And, for me, as to whether it was a terrorist attack, the moment I heard it, within 15 seconds I knew this was sadly a celebration of the mass murder of American citizens on September 11, 2001. And the American people need to know that our Government responds quickly.

I yield the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kelley, the vice chair of Asia and the Pacific, is recognized.

Mr. KELLY. I thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Courts, thank you for being here today.

When I read through your report, it really goes back to the 2009 report where you—I don't know that you were part of the department at that time, but I know you guys are the watchdogs for the American taxpayer dollar. You were suggesting then that the Department of State do a review.

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Mr. KELLY. Has it ever been done?

Mr. COURTS. It has not been done. We don't consider that they fully implemented that recommendation, no.

Mr. KELLY. Did they implement any of it?

Mr. COURTS. The Diplomatic Security Bureau itself has taken a number of measures to improve their strategic planning. But what we recommended is the Department needed to do a strategic review of the bureau, because the Bureau of Diplomatic Security is not in a position to say no when they are asked to provide support. So we really think that the Department needs to take a hard look at all the missions, all the many diffuse missions that the Diplomatic Security Bureau is responsible for, and make some hard choices about what they can achieve with the resources that they have or whether they need additional resources or whether the mission itself needs to be reduced.

Mr. KELLY. So what I am trying to understand is though in 2009, we are in 2012. So the results of September 11 of this year, then we got to ask, so 2009, 2010, 2011, now we got almost all the way through 2012 and there is still this accountability that has not been taken into account. And I am just trying to understand that when we look at this whole event, it is not about the money, because the money was there. In fact, it was greater amounts than were there before. And we also know that the Department of State has discretionary power over how the money would have been spent anyway. So it can't be that.

Ms. Lamb herself said it wasn't for lack of money, so I think it is kind of foolish to say that somehow it was a budgetary thing and that we put these people at risk. We didn't put them at risk. We actually put them at risk by completely ignoring a full year ahead of time the fact that this was a very vulnerable and very violent place.

I don't know, and I heard Mr. Nordstrom, I was there to hear his testimony, he talked about what they tried to do to increase the protection at the consulate or outpost, whatever you want to term it. This thing gets bounced around too much. I think the question that begs to be answered is why did we leave our Ambassador—and my colleague said he was there in Libya—he said you weren't, so you didn't see it, but he would tell you how bad it was. I mean, it was absolutely unstable. It was kind of a Wild West show.

So my question is so if that is the case and if it wasn't about money and it wasn't about budgetary counts, why would we continue to put our Ambassador at risk in an area that we took our security support team, Special Ops people, if it wasn't about the money, and we replaced them with \$4-an-hour Libyan nationals, who were unarmed, by the way. So an area that is so vulnerable, so violent, everybody that goes there says that it is a Wild West show, and we are saying, yeah, you know what we thought? We thought we should dumb down our security for that.

The GAO had nothing to do with that. Were the taxpayer dollars spent the right way? Did we get a return on our investment? I would say that it goes far beyond what we spent. We spent four lives because of a lack of attention to an issue that everybody says was completely out of control and unstable. It just doesn't make sense.

And forget the political end of it. Why we would put an Ambassador and other Americans at risk in that area and somehow back away from it now and say we just didn't see it coming? We saw it will coming for a full year. There were 230 attacks in Libya. There were 48 in Benghazi; there were two on that consulate. The day he died, Sean Smith tweeted to somebody, if we do not die tonight, we have to get these Libyans out of here that are taking pictures of the inside of our consulate.

My goodness. Everybody saw it coming. When the International Red Cross is targeted and attacked, when the Brits pull out and we are the last flag flying and we are saying we are surprised this happened because we had really normalized relations there; we even took their airplane away from them because it was so safe. At same time, we were telling people, travelers, don't go there, it is a danger zone.

So, Madam Chair, I thank you, or Mr. Wilson, you are sitting in the chair right now, and I appreciate what the GAO does, and I appreciate your coming here today. But the answers really are that we had the money; we had the resources; we got the ability to do it. This falls squarely on the shoulders of the Secretary of State, the Department of State, the President of the United States. They turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to an area that was so unstable.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA [presiding]. Thank you very much, Mr. Kelley.

We now proceed to Congressman Cicilline of Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Mr. Courts.

I would like you to, if you could, address what the implications of the Budget Control Act of 2011 are and what sequestration, what the impact would be on Diplomatic Security and the funding that is necessary. The across-the-board reductions, which are scheduled to occur on January 23rd, 2013, are estimated at about 8.2 percent of funding for security of our diplomats could be reduced. I just wonder if you have had an opportunity to look at what the implications of that kind of reduction would be on Diplomatic Security, kind of all across the world.

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, no, GAO has not conducted that work. I can't answer that question.

Mr. CICILLINE. Well, I mean, is it fair to say a reduction of that magnitude would not enhance security for our diplomats?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I don't know if the State Department were to take cuts, where they would apply those cuts, so I can't answer that question.

Mr. CICILLINE. I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

We now proceed to Congresswoman Jean Schmidt of Ohio.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Chairman.

I am concerned about what happened on September 11th, not for political reasons but for security reasons for the individuals, both here and abroad, because as I listened to all of the missteps that happened, I think it boils down to one thing, and it is called miscommunication.

First and foremost, we know that when the event occurred, somebody made up a tale that it was a YouTube video, and it was a spontaneous attack. Now, how did they determine that, and how did it get so widespread that this administration continued the tale all the way until the 18th of January? Now, I don't believe that this administration did it because they wanted to. I think that the miscommunication occurred and continued because further miscommunications occurred, which does a disservice to our President, to our Secretary of State and to everyone else involved.

But the other part that bothers me with this miscommunication is if this happened, why didn't we know something was going to happen ahead of time? Why didn't our intelligence community see it? I know they listen to chatter. Was there no chatter, or was it accidentally missed? I think that is another question that has to be answered, or else we are going to have this happen again.



Over the break, I saw a very good movie called “Argo,” and it is about what happened in Iran back in the 1970s. And, yes, it is a Hollywood version. But you know what was strikingly similar? It was miscommunication. And if we had miscommunication 40 years ago and it is occurring today with all the technology that has evolved since then, I think we need to find a way to make sure that it is prevented in the future.

I think the second thing that bothers me in all of this is the security or the lack of security, and could this have been prevented? Maybe it could have been with more money and more people on the ground. Maybe it was going to happen anyway. And I think whatever investigations occur need to look at that, because when you come up with a report about how we spend our money and should we improve on the spending of the money, it is not just spending money; it is spending it in the best manner possible so that we don’t have these situations in the future.

And it is really not a question to you. It is really what I think the frustration is with the American people out there on this situation. They want to know what happened and why it happened. They don’t want the political rhetoric with it. They just want an honest and clear answer. So all I am saying is that is what I am searching for. And if you have any crystal ball wisdom to anything that I have said, I would love to have the answer.

Mr. COURTS. I would just add that there are a lot of questions that have arisen as a result of what happened in Libya, and GAO certainly stands ready to assist the Congress and this committee in addressing those issues going forward.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. WILSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA. Thank you, Mrs. Schmidt.

We now proceed to Congressman Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As of today, what would you assess the risk of this type of attack happening again somewhere against one of our Ambassadors or embassies? What would be your risk assessment?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I am not privy to the risk-assessment information that State Department has at its disposal, so I can’t answer that question.

Mr. POE. So you don’t know?

Mr. COURTS. No, I don’t.

Mr. POE. Do you feel like the State Department has done an adequate job of securing our embassies?

Mr. COURTS. I can’t speak to Benghazi, because I don’t know what the arrangements were there. I would say that when we looked in 2009 at the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, we found that there were a number of areas where the capabilities that they had in place were not where they should have been.

Mr. POE. You are talking about embassies throughout the world?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct. I am talking about the Bureau of Diplomatic Security worldwide.

Mr. POE. So have you assessed that assessment since 2009? In other words, have you determined whether there was follow up by the State Department to fix all those problems that you found in 2009?

Mr. COURTS. We made a recommendation in our 2009 report that the Department take a strategic look at the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's mission and properly match that with the resources, and to date, they have not fully implemented that recommendation.

Mr. POE. What does that mean, fully implemented? Have they done 5 percent? Ninety percent? Give me something I can—

Mr. COURTS. I can't give it to you in percentage terms. I would say that we asked them to take a more meaningful look at all of the diffuse missions that the bureau is responsible for, to rationalize them, and then after rationalizing them, to ensure that the resources that were needed, the staffing that was needed and all the other resources were in place, and that they do that sort of strategic plan at the departmental level.

When I say that it is perhaps partially implemented, I am recognizing that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security itself has taken steps to improve their own strategic planning, but the Department hasn't taken the step that we recommended. And we think that is important because as I said before, the bureau itself is a support function. If they are told to secure the mission in Libya or anywhere else, they are going to salute smartly and try to do that, even if it means muddling through and pulling the resources from somewhere else.

Mr. POE. So if I understand you correctly, you came up with a valuation, a risk assessment of some kind, in 2009 for the State Department to help secure our embassies and our personnel overseas. That was given to the State Department. Here we are 3 years later, and based on what you know of the original risk assessment, there are still things that haven't been done that you recommended. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. COURTS. I wouldn't call what we did a risk assessment, but I would say that they have not fully implemented the recommendation that we had in our 2009 report.

Mr. POE. Okay. Do you know what those items are that they have not fully implemented?

Mr. COURTS. The main thing that they have not done is, on a Department level, they have not done the strategic review of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that we recommended. And we recommended that that review not only take a look at the resources and the missions as I mentioned but that it also address those challenges, those problems, those deficiencies that we had identified in our report, and that included the staffing shortages, that included the language deficiencies and the experience gaps and a number of other challenges.

Mr. POE. And is it still your recommendation that those items that haven't been done, whatever they are, should be done?

Mr. COURTS. Yes, sir.

Mr. POE. All right. The other question I had for you, in a hypothetical situation, based on what you have now learned about embassies and protection of embassies, if you had received a request for aid or help in the same situation, an Ambassador is in trouble outside the Embassy, our consulate compound, would you send help, or would you not send help?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, I can't answer that question. I don't have the specifics of the security arrangements in Benghazi. I don't

know what competing priorities existed at that time or what the factors for the decision were.

Mr. POE. Is it your understanding though that calls for help were ignored?

Mr. COURTS. Congressman, our work did not address the incident.

Mr. POE. So you don't know if that is true or not?

Mr. COURTS. No, I don't know.

Mr. POE. I yield back, Madam Chairman.

Mrs. SCHMIDT [presiding]. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Duncan from South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Save the best for last, I guess. The other side keeps talking about a \$400-million increase request from the President. Do you know how many days it has been since the United States has had a budget?

Mr. COURTS. No, sir, I don't.

Mr. DUNCAN. 1,296 days. The mathematician that you are, that is 3½ years, plus or minus. It has been 3½ years since the Nation has had a budget, and the President submitted a budget to the United States Congress, as he does every year I suppose. Do you know how many votes that budget got in the United States House of Representatives?

Mr. COURTS. No, Congressman, I don't.

Mr. DUNCAN. Zero. It didn't get a single Democrat or Republican vote in the House of Representatives. When it was brought up in the Democratic-controlled Senate, how many votes did it get over there?

Mr. COURTS. I don't know that answer.

Mr. DUNCAN. That number is zero, too. His request for an increase got zero votes in the United States Congress. It is not the amount of money that is allocated, it is how that money is being spent, and I appreciate you bearing with me as I pointed those facts out for the American people.

The questions that have been asked today are questions that are on the minds of the American people. These aren't just questions of the Republicans or maybe not questions of the Democrats. These are questions that the American people have about what happened in Benghazi: Why there weren't, I get the questions, why there weren't Marines there? Why did we allow the embassies or consulates to be protected by elements of foreign governments? What is true sovereign territory of a sovereign nation in another country? Why didn't we do enough with assets in the region to protect and rescue those four Americans that bravely lost their lives in Benghazi? These are questions that the American people have, and I believe the American people deserve answers for.

I think that we deserve answers as to why Ambassador Rice was run out to mislead the American people prior to an election. Those are valid questions of the American people that I believe we have the oversight responsibility here in the legislative branch to get answers to.

Under the Vienna Convention, diplomatic facilities are supposed to be protected by the host nations. In the case of Libya, the U.S. facilities in Benghazi were under the protection of the 17th Feb-

ruary Brigade, a local armed militia, which reportedly received monetary compensation and training from U.S. officials. Is that common? Is it common, and this is a question, how common is it for a U.S. diplomatic post to be under the protection of local armed militias rather than the central government forces? How common is that?

Mr. COURTS. I don't believe that is very common, Congressman.

Mr. DUNCAN. What is the normal structure of the agreements that we have in these countries?

Mr. COURTS. Well, as you mentioned yourself, the Vienna Convention requires that the host government protect our diplomatic missions abroad, just as we are responsible for protecting foreign missions that are here in the United States. Usually it is just a local guard force and our own personnel that provide primary security for our diplomatic facilities. But all of the—

Mr. DUNCAN. And that is common for other countries as well, is that correct?

Mr. COURTS. That is correct.

Mr. DUNCAN. So they were guarding our U.S. Embassy or consulate, but they were also guarding—on September 11, 2012, there were militia members probably guarding the British Embassy in Benghazi?

Mr. COURTS. I am not familiar with specific security arrangements in Libya. I can't answer.

Mr. DUNCAN. I will answer it for you, because the British had left Benghazi. So we ask the question, well, surely the militia, the 17th February Brigade was guarding the French Embassy in Benghazi. The answer to that is no as well, because they saw the hostile environment of Benghazi, they saw this coming and they left Benghazi and went back to Tripoli, as did the Red Cross.

We were the last man standing. The American flag was there as a target for the violence that was going on in Benghazi, and we failed to recognize that on 9/11, a day that is a red letter day for American history, that our enemies, folks that want to do us harm and al-Qaeda and others, may do something to attack America. And we saw the pattern in Benghazi of an IED thrown over the fence, a bomb placed on the exterior perimeter that blew a hole that 40 men could be run through, pictures being taken by elements of the militia that is supposed to be guarding us.

We missed those signs. Those are the questions that Americans wants answered, and I believe this Congress is going to get to the bottom of that. This is just the beginning in this committee, and I look forward to answering those for my constituents.

I appreciate your service. Thank you. I yield back.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Did you want to add anything, sir?

Mr. COURTS. No, thank you.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Well, I want to thank you for your time. We have learned a lot and I wish you well.

Our next panel, are you ready? You have been waiting a long time.

Our second panel, we will start with Mr. William Young, a senior policy analyst at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation. Mr. Young managed and led intelligence collection operations for the national clandestine service for over 30 years before he retired

in 2011. He spent most of his career in the Middle East and South Asia working on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and counter-proliferation issues. He also served in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as the Intelligence Community's mission manager for Yemen and Somalia as well as the national intelligence manager for Yemen. Prior to his work for ODNI, he was the Director of Operations Technology Office at the CIA.

The next witness will be Dr. James Carafano, who is the deputy director of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies and the director of the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies, both at the Heritage Foundation. Previously, Mr. Carafano was a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. He served 25 years in the Army, achieving the rank of Lt. Colonel. Dr. Carafano writes a weekly column on national security affairs for the Washington Examiner and has written numerous books on defense and security.

Our last witness will be Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann who is the president of the American Academy of Diplomacy. As a career member of the Foreign Service, he has served as Ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain and Afghanistan, as well as posts at the U.S. embassies in Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, among others. He served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near East Affairs from 1997 to 2000 and as director of the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs from 1991 to 1994.

Ambassador Neumann served as an Army infantry officer in Vietnam, which personally I want to thank you for your service in Vietnam and for all of you who have had military service. And you hold a Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal and Combat Infantry Badge. In Baghdad, he was awarded the Army's Outstanding Civilian Service Medal. He has received numerous awards at the State Department rewarding his service.

Without objection, the witnesses' written statements will be inserted into the record.

Mr. Young, we will start with you.

**STATEMENT OF MR. WILLIAM YOUNG, SENIOR POLICY  
ANALYST, RAND CORPORATION**

Mr. YOUNG. Madam Chair Schmidt, Ranking Member Berman, other members, thank you for the opportunity today to talk to you about Embassy security. What I would like to do is offer a framework, a way to look at Embassy security or Diplomatic Security in high-threat environments, and to offer suggestions to improve it.

It is good to begin with an understanding that it is not possible to mitigate all risk in environments like this. Once a decision is made to establish a diplomatic presence, planners at the State Department look at the actual facility that will house our people, the housing areas if they have to live outside the diplomatic compound, and also the routes to and from.

First and foremost among all the considerations for planning for security in these types of areas is the support of the local or host government. Without it, in my opinion, it is not possible to secure any civilian facility in a high-threat environment.

The local government, whether it is a militia or whether it is the actual government, should be willing to provide a visible military presence at the outside of the mission. They should be willing to provide barriers. They should be willing to close the streets in order to increase the setback from the local population. They also should be willing to provide information about what is happening in the neighborhoods surrounding the mission in order to give us some early warning.

Second in importance when planning for security for these types of missions is knowing or having an awareness of what actually is happening outside the fence line of the Embassy. This can be done using roving patrols, local investigators, which can establish—or who can establish relationships with local shop owners, with neighborhood committees. All of these people in the neighborhoods around a mission have a vested interest in protecting their way of life, their families, their businesses. They often know what is going to happen before it happens. We need to be able to set up mechanisms to collect this information and to bring it quickly back into the mission multiple times a day so that when action is necessary it can be taken in a timely manner.

The third leg of the security stool is the actual mission itself, the structure of the building and the layout of the compound. Is it an Inman style building, meaning does it have blast-resistant walls and glass, does it have sufficient setback from the street? Or is it a residence that was the only property that was available for us to move into? If so, then measures can be taken to harden such a facility, locks and gates and walls, local guard force, which is typical in these instances, a Marine security detachment of guards, perhaps a quick reaction team from Diplomatic Security, all of which is intended to deter an attack. Terrorists do not want to fail. They have resource considerations also. So to the extent we can deter their attack, the better.

Technology can help in this regard. I consider it the fourth leg of the stool when talking about security for these places. Long-range acoustic devices can be fitted on the outside of the missions to repel attacks. They can be configured for the bottoms of armored vehicles to take our people to and from work. Cameras can be fixed to the outside walls of the mission with pattern-recognition software to determine what is happening on the streets in order to give us a heads up, some early warning. We can monitor social media for the intensity of language being used and to find out again in terms of early warning why the shops might be closed tomorrow afternoon, and then we can send our local investigators out in order to get more of the detail.

Other lower-cost measures can be taken, although these other measures are not high cost. Plywood can be put on the windows to prevent shattered glass from killing people. Wire mesh can be put over the facility to pre-detonate certain types of rockets that are shot.

So all of these measures are helpful, but none of them by themselves or even in tandem can prevent a full military assault on an Embassy compound. This is why I think it is important to focus on shaping the way the local residents view our diplomatic presence

and, to the extent possible, to create a deterrent posture, enough of a deterrent posture to convince the attackers to go elsewhere.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I will try to answer any questions you have.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

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Testimony

## Embassy Security

*From The Outside In*

William Young

RAND Office of External Affairs

CT-360

November 2012

Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on November 15, 2012

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*Embassy Security*  
*From The Outside In<sup>2</sup>*

**Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**United States House of Representatives**

**Benghazi and Beyond:**  
**What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012, and**  
**How to Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts**

**November 15, 2012**

Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Berman, members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to appear before you on the issue of embassy security. I would like to offer a way to look at the issue and to show how improvements might be made from the outside-in. Before I start, let me make clear that I have not been to Benghazi and had already left government service by the time the tragic attack occurred there. I offer these views based upon my previous years of experience as a senior CIA officer serving in multiple high-threat environments in the Middle East, and not based upon any particular research I've done while at the RAND Corporation.

We should begin by recognizing that it is not possible to mitigate all risk. When deciding to establish a diplomatic presence in a high-threat area, you need to consider the importance of the mission and the measures needed to protect it. For example, is the mission essential? If so, is it possible to protect the embassy or consulate, as well as the housing areas and routes to and from the offices? If not, then it might be necessary to reconsider your plans.

First and foremost among all security considerations for missions abroad is the amount and type of support provided by the host government. Without local government support, it might not be possible to secure any civilian facility, especially one in a high-threat area.

For example, the host government should be willing to provide a noticeable military presence outside the embassy or consulate as a deterrent to groups contemplating a protest or attack. It

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also should be willing to use barriers to close roads --either completely or in part-- around the facility to increase the degree of "set back" from the street. Not only does this expand the distance between consular buildings and potential vehicle threats, but this will make it more difficult for attack planners to evaluate their target. This is an important deterrent: attackers often have to spend days and sometimes weeks up front casing the buildings, studying the daily movement of people in and around the target area, and evaluating the security procedures in place at the target compounds. Their inability to see inside the embassy or consulate compound --created by this increased "set back"-- raises the level of uncertainty for them and could convince them not to attack or alternatively to seek a more visibly accessible target elsewhere.

The host government, through its police, its intelligence service, or local militias, should also provide intelligence gained from its penetrations of terrorist groups and fringe elements. Such information would help embassy staff increase their level of awareness, and strengthen the security posture both of the adjacent facilities as well as the movement of its officers in the city.

Building on the security foundation provided by the host government, the second most important consideration when developing a strategy to protect a diplomatic mission in a high-threat area is the method for acquiring knowledge of what is happening outside the embassy's fence line on the streets in the surrounding neighborhoods. People are creatures of habit and move about their daily business with purpose to and from their workplaces and around their homes. Shop owners and neighbors know what their streets look like on a normal day and often know when to stay home on the day of a protest or a terrorist attack. They can often tell when strangers are present and could provide critical information in advance of an attack or as groups mobilize for a protest. This type of information can be collected daily by roving patrols in surrounding areas and by reliable local investigators who have established relationships within the neighborhoods around the embassy. Since the information is likely to be disjointed, the Regional Security Office (RSO) would have to set up a mechanism by which the information could be processed and disseminated quickly enough to ensure early warning that allows the embassy staff time to set emergency action plans in motion. Many RSOs already have regular contact with their counterparts in the police, who should be willing to provide daily situation reports about what is being said and what is happening on nearby streets.

A third consideration when developing an effective security strategy would be the actual structure of the buildings and layout of the diplomatic compound. Is the embassy an "Inman" structure with blast-resistant walls and glass with significant set-back from the street? Or is it a former residence or set of buildings in a housing compound that has not yet been hardened against attack? In high-threat areas where the United States is immediately required to have a presence to work

with a new local government, there often is no time to wait for the construction crews to arrive. Building a new embassy or consulate can take years.

In the meantime, it would be important to collaborate with the host government to immediately build up the security outside the embassy while guards, locks, gates and procedures are put in place to establish access control and safe havens for protection inside the compound.

A small detachment of U.S. Marines, part of the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group, is often present to protect documents and information systems, but the protocol governing their ability to engage with attackers outside the chancery and other main buildings is limited. There is a need to review the rules governing the role of Marine Corps security guards—particularly in the event of an emergency—should the Marines be required to engage with attackers inside an embassy or consulate compound before they enter the chancery or main buildings.

If the threat of a large military style attack is credible, then additional protective security inside the diplomatic compound will be necessary. The perimeter security provided by the local government, however, could serve as a deterrent to attackers, who, realizing that an assault could be repelled, might choose a softer target. After all, their resources are not limitless. They too need to be mindful of the costs of losing too many people. The physical-security measures in place at the mission, therefore need to be designed with this in mind. Their primary purpose is to deter.

Technology can help. Cameras with pattern-recognition software positioned around the embassy to monitor the streets can ascertain what those streets look like on a normal day and what they look like on a day when there will be protests or an attack. On the day of an incident, protesters need to mobilize or attackers need to preposition themselves before the assault. This preparation can be identified by the cameras and software.

Similarly, predictive analytics can be applied to social media collected from Facebook, Twitter, and other accounts to determine ahead of time when crowds might form or when an attack is being planned. Although social media might not be able to uncover the actual identities of the attackers, it could bring to light certain disparate pieces of information, which when analyzed and linked could provide early warning of a threat. For example, local residents and shop owners know by word of mouth not to be on the street or to have their shops open after lunch tomorrow. They may talk about it either in face-to-face meetings and/or on their Facebook pages. The embassy won't know the reason why the shops will be closed but can use this indication of possible unrest to probe further within the community by asking its contacts.

The intensity of the language used on blogs and in Twitter feeds also can be measured to provide further early warning of public sentiment on the same day. This type of foresight can help clarify the nature of the threat and convince security officers in the mission to take appropriate measures to deal with the problem ahead of time. Discussing the matter with the local government might be sufficient to head off an otherwise potentially ugly event. The local government, for example, could intervene and prevent a nascent mob from growing and getting too close to the embassy. Once a mob forms or the terrorists are in place, it is much more difficult to stop or even limit a violent protest or attack.

Technology can help even at the point that the protest or assault threatens to breach the outer wall of the diplomatic compound. Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD) configured appropriately and placed either around the outside of the embassy or inside the compound but outside the main buildings are a non-lethal way to deter attacks, prevent damage, and save lives. This same technology can be configured for the bottom of armored vehicles to protect embassy officers in transit. This version of the device, known as SoundBarrier, presents an enduring blast of sound against an attacker which creates the audio equivalent of standing behind a jet engine on takeoff. Crowds attacking an embassy car or trying to breach a perimeter wall will be driven back by the sound. Those inside the car or inside the vehicle will remain unaffected because the sound is emitted only in an outward direction.

Other, lower tech options also can be brought into play. For example, wire mesh screening installed above the embassy compound could serve as a shield to force some rockets to pre-detonate above their targets. Plywood placed inside windows that are not made of protective glass or that have no mylar covering can be used to protect personnel from shrapnel and flying debris after an explosion. There are several similar low-cost measures that can be used at temporary or new, makeshift facilities where a diplomatic presence is required before proper security can be put in place.

All of the measures discussed above can improve the security and the ability of diplomats to function in a high-threat or otherwise hostile environment. No amount of security, however, short of the type of military presence found in actual war zones can defend against a large, well-armed terrorist attack. There are no guarantees under any scenario that security can be one hundred percent effective. When entering a high-threat area, diplomats and those who support them agree to accept some degree of risk. As mentioned earlier, the best approach is to weigh the importance of the mission against how much of the risk can be mitigated. One of the best ways to lower the level of risk is to focus on shaping the way the local population and would-be protesters and attackers view the embassy, its staff, and their movements. If they can be

convinced that the costs of violence are too high, because of the visible presence of local military and police units or some of the other measures noted above, then they will seek out targets that are more acceptable.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and share my observations. I would be happy to take questions.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Dr. Carafano.

**STATEMENT OF JAMES JAY CARAFANO, PH.D., DIRECTOR,  
DOUGLAS AND SARAH ALLISON CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY  
STUDIES, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Mr. CARAFANO. Thank you so much. The greatest honor that we can bestow on the fallen and the debt we can repay to their families is to do better. I want to begin by saying why it is not just important to learn the lessons of Benghazi but to apply them.

The first is if you look at al-Qaeda and its affiliates, they have had a tradition or a practice that once they have settled on a tactic, they come back to it again and again and again. So regardless of who actually perpetrated this attack, you can't but believe that al-Qaeda and its affiliates will look at this, and this will be a target in the future.

The second thing I think we have to remember is this is a department at war. The State Department has been at war for 10 years. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security has been significantly grown, their missions have expanded, their resources have expanded, their responsibilities have expanded. This is a department with very deep operational experience in dealing in high-risk, high-threat areas. This is the kind of attack we should have expected, and indeed, a majority of the attacks against U.S. assets in 2011 were in the Near East region. It is like we spent 10 years getting ready for 9/11, and then what we got was a 9/11.

So where do we go from here? And I think what this committee can best focus on is how do we turn tragedy into a good case study where we can extract lessons learned that can be applied to systematic reform if that is what is called for.

When you look at security in high-threat areas, it is basically a belt and suspenders business. There are really four key areas, and that really prompts four key questions. And I really do believe if anything I have heard said today makes sense at all, getting the answers to these four questions is absolutely essential.

The first is, what were the counterterrorism and early-warning mechanisms that were in place? Look, you can't childproof everything, and we know from experience the single best way to stop a terrorist attack is to stop it before it gets started. So that is particularly important I think in light of the fact that this administration put its counterterrorism strategy in 2011.

The second question is look—the administration put a counterterrorism strategy in place in 2011.

You are going to get attacked, so the second question is what risk assessment did you do, and what kind of risk-assessment mitigation message did you put in place to deal with that? The State Department recognizes this. That is why there are regional security officers. They play a pivotal role in doing risk assessments and organizing risk mitigation.

The third question is, look, I don't care how safe you think you are, you may get attacked anyway. So then the question is, what kind of contingency plans were in place to respond to rescue, to recover; how well were they exercised? How full and complete were they? Again, the State Department recognizes this. This is why

they form emergency action committees to coordinate these kinds of plans and then hopefully integrate them with other agencies.

And, finally, once a crisis happens, you want to draw on all of the resources that are reasonably available to respond. So then you really want to understand what was the process for interagency cooperation and crisis management. Again, that is why we have a Diplomatic Security Command Center at least for the State Department worldwide to organize these kinds of things.

My advice to this committee is, look, whether these are markers that need to be laid down for the ARB or what other kinds of investigative or review processes are in place, you get to the answers to these four questions, and then we can do better.

Thank you.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carafano follows:]



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*CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY*

**Learning from Benghazi: Rethinking  
Preparedness and Response for  
Security of U.S. Embassies,  
Consulates, and Diplomatic Missions  
in High-Risk Scenarios**

**Testimony before  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
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My name is Dr. James Jay Carafano. I am the Deputy Director of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies and Director of the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and address this vital subject. The many U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions around the world are the clearest and boldest statement of the United States' determination to represent the interests of the nation and its citizens and to engage other peoples in the common pursuit of prosperity, peace, and freedom. Providing security for these outposts that protect U.S. personnel and their operations, while at the same time facilitating the accomplishment of the mission, is vital. At Benghazi something went terribly wrong. U.S. diplomatic personnel should not have been placed in this kind of jeopardy without purposeful and adequate measures to mitigate risk. We must learn from this tragedy how to do better.

In my testimony today, I would like to concentrate on what I see as four key questions that must be addressed in evaluating the system in place to ensure the security of U.S. diplomatic personnel and facilities overseas: (1) What counterterrorism and early measures were in place to proactively address threats? (2) What risk assessments were performed and what risk mitigation measures were adopted prior to the attack? (3) What contingency planning was undertaken and exercised to respond to armed assaults against U.S. facilities in Benghazi? (4) How was the interagency response to the incident organized and managed?

I believe these are the four key questions that must be fully and completely answered in order to conduct a proper case study of the Benghazi attack and draw appropriate lessons that might be applied to addressing how we better protect those that serve us. I would like to address these questions in turn.

My responsibilities at The Heritage Foundation comprise supervising all of the foundation's research on public policy concerning foreign policy and national security. Counterterrorism and physical security of key government assets has been a particular Heritage research priority. Over the past decade, we have assembled a robust, talented, and dedicated research team. I have the honor and privilege of leading that team.

Heritage analysts have studied and written authoritatively on virtually every aspect of the challenges of foreign policy and national security. The results of all our research are publicly available on the Heritage Web site at [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org). We collaborate frequently with the research community, including such institutions the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Aspen Institute, the Center for National Policy, the Hudson Institute, the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute, and the Strategic Studies Institute and Center for Strategic Leadership at the Army War College. Heritage analysts also serve on a variety of government advisory efforts, including task forces under the Homeland Security Advisory Council and the Advisory Panel on Department of Defense Capabilities for

Support of Civil Authorities. Our research programs are nonpartisan, dedicated to developing policy proposals that will keep the nation safe, free, and prosperous.

I am particularly proud of The Heritage Foundation's long and substantive record of research on counterterrorism and physical security. This effort reflects the foundation's commitment to advancing public policies that enhance our security by thwarting terrorist travel; encouraging economic growth by promoting the legitimate exchange of goods, peoples, services, and ideas among free nations; and fostering a free and open civil society—all at the same time.

#### Target-Embassy

In December 1967, the U.S. government agreed to turn the defense of Saigon over to the South Vietnamese Army. For that reason, and because the U.S. embassy represented America's presence in that embattled country, after midnight on January 1, 1968, it was a prime target during the surprise Tet Offensive. The television coverage of the fight for the embassy did more than any other image to shake American's faith in Washington's ability to achieve its objectives during the Vietnam War.

A little over a decade later, on the morning of November 4, 1979, the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran, was stormed. Fifty-two Americans were taken hostage and held for 444 days. Not only did the U.S. government fail to protect its citizens and suffer a crippling setback to its prestige and foreign policy, but the seizure helped solidify the rule of a totalitarian regime that today represents the single greatest threat to the region and U.S. interests in the Middle East.

No adversary could examine this history and not understand the strategic value of striking at facilities that are both important symbols of American presence and vital centers for representing U.S. interests. Al-Qaeda certainly understands this. Among the first acts in its organized campaign to attack and roll back U.S. influence, were the bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. The attacks killed 258 people and injured more than 5,000.

From the public information that is available, the exact relationship between the Benghazi attack and the broader al-Qaeda-inspired Islamist insurgency is still not clear. But here is what is abundantly clear. We have seen a consistent pattern by al-Qaeda and its affiliates that once they adopt a tactic, they don't abandon it. They study the results. They look to improve and innovate—and they come back and try it again. Witnessing the global attention that the Benghazi attack has attracted, it would be irresponsible not believe that this tactic won't get renewed attention. We have already heard calls from al-Qaeda-affiliated sources for additional attacks on U.S. embassies. The point is, regardless of the motivation and organization behind Benghazi, we should anticipate al-Qaeda and its affiliates will aspire to more such attacks in the future. That means we can't start too soon in preparing to counter such efforts.

#### Rethinking US Security

After Benghazi, the administration announced an immediate review of security at U.S. diplomatic facilities worldwide. Other efforts are also underway. For example, earlier this month it was reported that the State Department's Office of the Inspector General would undertake two

reviews of the security posture at overseas posts in areas believed prone to violence and terrorism. These are appropriate measures—but they might not be adequate. What standards and judgments are being used to evaluate the efficacy of security? How have they been updated since the 9/11 attacks on Benghazi? What lessons does the government think it has learned?

Appropriately rethinking security at U.S. embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions may require a new baseline. Is the failure that U.S. agencies were not taking measures they should have, or are there gaps and deficiencies that are now apparent? Here, a full and complete case study of the preparedness and response to the Benghazi attack might be extremely helpful.

Publicly available information provided by U.S. federal agencies and the administration is completely inadequate to conduct an effective case study and offer real insights into systemic issues regarding diplomatic security.

The U.S. State Department has organized an Accountability Review Board (ARB) to assess the circumstances surrounding the Benghazi attack. Whether the ARB or other information provided by the U.S. constitutes the basis for an adequate case study, I believe, hinges on there being full and complete answers to the following four questions. These questions, I believe, are the essential core that must be addressed to ensure the U.S. government has an adequate enterprise in place to meet the threat of armed attacks against U.S. diplomatic facilities.

#### Counterterrorism and Early Warning

When it comes to protecting U.S. critical infrastructure and key assets, I have often used the phrase “you can’t child proof America.” I think this maxim holds as well as for the hundreds of U.S. diplomatic facilities worldwide. If the U.S. tries to be strong everywhere it will be strong nowhere. Therefore, the most effective means to reduce threats is to address them “before” they strike. We have seen this tactic work effectively in the United States where at least 53 Islamist-inspired terrorists attacks since 9/11 have been thwarted before execution.<sup>1</sup> The best way to diminish an organized terrorist threat is to be proactive and disrupt it before the terrorists have the luxury of deciding when, where, and how to strike.

Thus, the first and perhaps most essential question in regards to the Benghazi attack is: What was done to identify and disrupt organized terrorist operations aimed at U.S. personnel and facilities?

This question is of particular importance because it may provide insights into the effectiveness of the administration’s larger counterterrorism strategy, which it unveiled in 2011. That strategy is heavily focused on disrupting al-Qaeda and its affiliates by targeting leadership entities. At the time, The Heritage Foundation assessment of the strategy was that it was inadequate because it did not take into account that al-Qaeda was more an element of the global Islamist insurgency rather than simply a transnational terrorist network. We believed the U.S. approach was not

<sup>1</sup> Jessica Zuckerman, “Fifty-Third Terror Plot Foiled Since 9/11: Bombing Targets U.S. Financial Hub,” *Heritage Foundation Issue Brief* No. 3758, October 17, 2012, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/10/terror-plot-foiled-in-new-york-bombing-targets-us-financial-hub>

sufficiently robust to address the threat.<sup>2</sup> Understanding U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Libya and their effectiveness may provide key insights into whether the administration's strategy has been put into practice and whether it is working or wanting.

#### Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Allocating resources for security will always be a challenge for a global power with global responsibility. Applying an appropriate method for evaluating risk and adopting the best combination of risk mitigation measures is an important tool for helping to decide where to apply resources with best effect.

Risk assessments provide objective measures of three factors.<sup>3</sup>

*Threat Assessment* Examines what our adversary can accomplish and with what degree of lethality or effect.

*Criticality Assessment.* Evaluates the effect that will be achieved if the adversary accomplishes his goals. This examines both physical consequences, social and economic disruption, and psychological effects. Not all consequences can be prevented. So in order to assist in prioritization, there is a process designed to identify the criticality of various assets: What is the asset's function or mission and how significant is it?

*Vulnerability Assessment.* Looks at our vulnerabilities and how they can be mitigated, including weaknesses in structures (both physical and cyber) and other systems/processes that could be exploited by a terrorist. It then asks what options there are to reduce the vulnerabilities identified or, if feasible, eliminate them.

Any evaluation of the preparedness and response for the Benghazi attack has to include a rigorous examination of how the State Department evaluated risk and how it elected to mitigate that risk.

#### Contingency Planning

Bad things happen. The effectiveness of even the best risk assessments are limited by the completeness of the data and the judgment of those participating in the process. Thus, contingency plans to respond to unforeseen or anticipated threats not easily countered are essential. In order to fully assess the response to the Benghazi attacks it is vital to know (1) what plans were in place, (2) how fully developed and exercised they were, (3) if they were implemented, did they function as anticipated, and if not, why?

<sup>2</sup> The Heritage Foundation Counterterrorism Task Force, "A Counterterrorism Strategy for the 'Next Wave,'" Heritage Foundation Special Report No. 98, August 24, 2011, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2011/08/a-counterterrorism-strategy-for-the-next-wave>.

<sup>3</sup> James Jay Carafano, "Risk and Resiliency: Developing the Right Homeland Security Public Policies for the Post-Bush Era," testimony before the Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. House of Representatives, June 24, 2008, <http://clsdemocrats.house.gov/SiteDocuments/20080625151302-26534.pdf>

#### Integrated Response

The U.S. presence in any theater usually involves many federal agencies. Some are under the leadership of the ambassador as part of the country team. Others fall under the authority of the regional Combatant Commander. Still, others may be operating under other authorities. Regardless, when a crisis happens their full weight should immediately be brought to bear to protect U.S. lives and the nation's interests. Any complete case study will address the command, control, and coordination of any efforts to organize and integrate efforts to bring all possible resources to bear after it became clear that U.S. personnel in Benghazi were under threat.

#### Learning and Looking Forward

Many other questions and issues have been raised in regards to the attack and their aftermath. I won't attempt to judge the worthiness of their consideration. What I will say is that unless the administration and the Congress have a full, complete, unvarnished, and accurate answer to these four questions—well, then, if there are lessons to be learned from this tragedy that could help us better prepare for future threats, those lessons may well be lost.

The greatest value of this hearing today will be if this committee can establish the framework that has been filled and commit to relentlessly pursue the facts until that task is done and the lessons not just "learned" but applied.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this vital issue. I look forward to your questions.

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Mrs. SCHMIDT. Ambassador Neumann.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE RONALD E. NEUMANN,  
PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY**

Mr. NEUMANN. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you, Representative Berman, for asking me to join this hearing that has a focus on the future as well as the past.

This focus needs a perspective that embeds security within the context of our larger diplomatic purpose. Thus I think my added value to you is in speaking about the issues of carrying on diplomacy in a dangerous and difficult world. I have four basic points to make.

First, as you have heard from other witnesses, there is no absolute security, and there will not be. We recently saw a full-up Marine base in Helmand suffer a perimeter breach, loss of life and destruction of aircraft by about 15 attackers.

Second, remember that the central issue is about balance, how much risk to take to accomplish what mission, and how important is that mission to our national purpose? Many decisions of this type will need to be made in the field by senior diplomats working with their security professionals.

Many foreign governments will not allow all the security measures that we deem necessary. Sometimes we will shove them into agreement. But, for example, many of our embassies are located closer to streets than we would like in the age of car bombs, and many of these countries will not agree to close all of the streets we would like closed. That includes ones in much more civilized or much more calm areas.

So, all I am really pointing out is there are constant decisions all over the world about how much risk to take. Perhaps, in some cases, we should pull out rather than take risks. But those are going to be difficult decisions. Just to suggest how to think about that, let me suggest the real one of Libya and the likely future one of Syria.

In Libya, we have a weak but sensitive government and extremely difficult security situation and a national interest in trying to support more moderate elements to help the country to a stable future, free of extremism. In this fluctuating situation with a multitude of political players, I believe our policy interests absolutely require on-the-ground work to know the people, make judgments about what will work and suggest corrections essential to policy implementation.

Perhaps one could argue that in Libya, it is just too dangerous and we shouldn't be there, we have to pull out. But even if you could make that case for Libya, consider Syria. When the day comes that Bashar el Assad leaves, the situation in Syria is likely to be at least as dangerous and chaotic as the one in Libya. Iran, Hezbollah, Iraq, Turkey and Israel will all have strong interests in what happens inside Syria. I doubt that we will be able to say that this is just too dangerous, and we have to leave the future to others, and that will mean taking risks with our people.

My third point touches on the role of the State Department in supporting security. I just want to make the basic point not about whether there was enough money and the issues you were talking

about this morning, but that when security is tight, there is always a constant tension between new demands in evolving situations and the difficulty of finding funding in budgets that have to be established years in advance. I think there is some reason to think about whether there should be some form of reserve funds that have more flexibility.

My final point, and I think it is perhaps my most important one, deals with the level of responsibility for risk. Some decisions are Washington-only to be on the ground. The second issue of providing security resources is shared between field and headquarters. If State says no to a request, an Ambassador must decide whether and how to appeal or not.

But there remains a critical area of responsibility to consider, and that is the need to leave space for decisions in the field about the balance between risk and benefit. A zero risk approach, a search for fault that becomes overly politicized and turns into a gotcha game will increasingly create a political climate in Washington that is counterproductive for achieving our foreign policy goals.

Senior officials of this and future administrations, fearing responsibility for whatever goes wrong, will reinforce a climate that is already too far advanced, in which our diplomatic personnel spend their time behind walls rather than getting out.

A great many of my, I should say, former diplomatic colleagues are prepared to accept risk, as they have when volunteering for Iran and Afghanistan. Many feel that their jobs are already excessively hampered by our security restrictions. Not every risk is worth running, but neither can America's diplomatic interests be achieved from behind walls and razor wire.

I think it is absolutely correct to do a post mortem, as you are doing. After all, it was Ambassador Stevens who made the judgment that he should travel to Benghazi. As you inquire about how to adapt, I hope you will ask how to avoid overreaction, because the policy costs of security considerations need to be weighed along with the risks that are posed to our diplomats.

These are difficult decisions, and that is why I believe the Congress and the executive have a mutual responsibility to support reasoned decision making in the field by our senior diplomats as well as giving them the resources to be as safe as possible.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Neumann follows:]



House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
**Benghazi and Beyond**  
November 15, 2012  
Testimony by Ronald E. Neumann  
Ambassador (ret)  
President, American Academy of Diplomacy

Madam Chairman, Representative Berman, thank you for asking me to testify. Your hearing focuses on the future as well as the past. To address the future well I believe one needs a perspective that embeds security issues within the context of our larger diplomatic purpose. Thus, I think my value added is in speaking about the issues of carrying on diplomacy in a dangerous world. My credentials to do so are based on my 40 years of Federal service in which I have been in one war as a soldier and three—Algeria, Iraq and Afghanistan—as a diplomat. I have carried a weapon when under assassination threat in two other countries and had my embassy stormed by mobs in yet another country. I note this because in considering Benghazi it is useful to remember that this is not a new world in which the diplomatic profession confronts dangers never seen before. The dangers are real enough, and they evolve tactically, but conceptually they are not new.

I have four basic points to make.

First, there is no absolute security. We recently saw a full up Marine base in Helmand suffer a perimeter breach, loss of life and destruction of aircraft by around 15 attackers. When security breaks down there will be many legitimate questions about what could have been done differently. However, they need to be framed in the context of what was known of threats and why risks were taken, not against a belief that we should be able to foresee all threats.

This brings me to my second point. The central issue that must repeatedly be confronted is about balance; how much risk to take to accomplish what mission and how important is that mission to our national purpose? Many decisions of this type will need to be made in the field by senior diplomats working with their security professionals.

My third point touches on the role of the State Department in supporting security. This is complex and there will be many detailed questions that as a retired official I will not be able to answer. But one thing I can tell you is that when security funding is tight you have a constant tension between new security demands in evolving situations and the difficulty of finding funding in budgets that have to be established months or years earlier for presentation to Congress. I am not proposing wasteful largess but I do think that the concept of reserve funds and authorities needs serious consideration if security is to err on the side of flexible response. State's role also must include security training for senior managers as well as security officers.

My final point touches on the political responsibility of those in both the executive branch and the congress. Personnel in the field must make difficult decisions about risk to accomplish their mission. When things go wrong it is reasonable to review those decisions, as the Congress and

the Accountability Review Board are now doing. However, if the post facto examination becomes too politicized you will reinforce at the political level in Washington a fear of taking risk that has already gone too far in my judgment. Sound foreign policy judgments require knowledge that can only be gained by interaction on the ground. If our diplomats now retreat even further into their bunkers, if they become even more hampered in their ability to actually understand the local scene, and if as a result they cannot distinguish successful policies from failing ones the fault will not be in some weak kneed “diplomatic culture” but in the failure of political authorities in Washington to assume their own responsibilities.

I would like to expand on these points.

#### **No Absolute Security**

To observe that there is no absolute security is not the same as justifying all risk. But it is important to understand that in many countries there is a virtually continuous stream of threats. Some are more serious. Some are too vague to help although in retrospect one may see something that was missed at the time. My point is simply to describe a complex environment in which there is a constant “white noise” factor of security threats. That is the context in which real decisions about security get made. Security can always be better. It will never be perfect.

#### **Risk vs. Benefit**

In the war situations of Iraq and Afghanistan we have needed and been able to have military security or military back up of diplomatic security. That is not going to be possible in much of the rest of the world. Governments, even those that lack the capacity to provide full security for diplomats, tend to be sensitive about their sovereignty. In many cases they will not allow all the security measures that we deem necessary. For example, in many countries our embassies are located closer to streets than we would like in the age of car-bombs. And many of these countries will not agree to close all the streets that we would like closed. Sometimes we have ways to push, or prod, or threaten in order to get the cooperation that we need but sometimes we don't. So we are constantly making decisions about how much risk to take in countries all over the world. It may be that in some cases we should decide to pull out rather than take risks. Those decisions are difficult because often they are about degree of risk vs. the utility of being on the ground. Consider two cases; the real one of Libya and the likely future one of Syria.

In Libya we have a weak but sensitive government, an extremely difficult security situation and a national interest in trying to support more moderate elements to help the country to a stable future free of extremism and terrorism. In this fluctuating situation with a multitude of players and political forces our policy interests absolutely require on the ground work. That is the only way to know the people, to make judgments about who to help and how, to identify risks and to make the course corrections that will be essential to implement any policy in such turbulent times. That is a situation in which military level force protection may not be possible both because the Libyan government may not agree to it and because too much of the appearance of an occupying army might play into the hands of the very extremists whose influence we want to weaken. I am not justifying the specific decisions made before the attack nor commenting on the

particulars of the security posture now. Rather, these comments are simply to point out that to accomplish America's political purpose our diplomats are going to have to take some risks.

I suppose one could argue that for a variety of reasons the mission is too difficult and the risks too great and therefore we shouldn't be in Libya at all.

But even if you could make that case for Libya, and it is not one I would agree with, consider Syria. When the day comes that Basher al Assad leaves the situation in Syria is likely to be at least as dangerous and chaotic as is the one in Libya. Actually, it will probably be more dangerous because hostile outsiders like Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon will probably be operating to preserve their interests. Israel will have a strong interest in what happens inside Syria. So too will Iraq and Turkey, all of whom share borders with Syria. Will it be wise to say that this is just too dangerous so we have to leave the future to others? I doubt it. In a country where personal relations and trust are the bedrock of effectiveness we cannot operate only by cell phone and internet with people we do not know and acquire the knowledge to make wise policy choices. We will need to be on the ground in order to influence people and policy outcomes. That will mean taking risks. How will we judge which ones to take?

One level of judgment is a Washington issue. Should we be represented at all in Syria, or Libya, or Iraq or Afghanistan?

A second level of judgment about risk vs. benefit will be in the interaction of the Embassy and Washington. What resources need to be provided? The situation may change, risks may grow. What was asked for in Libya and what was or was not done lies outside my expertise. But in the future as in the past ambassadors will have to make judgments about whether and how to appeal decisions they don't like or whether to get on with their job with what they have. Washington officials will have to consider whether to take a second look at how to spread resources that will always be somewhat inadequate for the many demands.

#### **Utility of a Reserve Fund**

While there can never be as much funding as every contingency will require I do think it would be useful to look carefully at the concept of some form of reserve fund. Budgets justified and prepared in advance will not have full funding for all contingencies. But without a functioning reserve new risks can only be responded to by cutting other programs. This tension, between what to fund and what to cut, inevitably makes a bureaucracy slower to change course. Again, this is absolutely not a justification for decisions made about what resources to send to Libya. Indeed, I have been on the other end of the problem when I had to intervene very forcefully to overcome State Department resistance and have an incompetent contractor blocked from taking over our perimeter security in Kabul. But that said, without more room to maneuver financially security costs will continue to pose the risk of making responses to threats slower than they should be.

#### **Field Judgments and Washington Responsibilities**

A third level of judgment is in the field. How much risk should one take in travel to a particular meeting? How much is the meeting worth to accomplishing a US national political purpose. If there are threats, how can they be mitigated? There are often creative solutions. In Baghdad we did many meetings in hotels in the so called "Red Zone" so that contacts could meet with us without the risks of trying to enter the "Green Zone" or being marked too much as friends of the Americans because our heavily armored convoy was parked in front of their home. In Algeria I told my security officer which districts I needed to visit in monitoring an election but left him the freedom to decide on specific polling places and routes. In Afghanistan there were innumerable situations where I had to judge actions against risks.

I have elaborated about the situation of making risk decisions in the field. The reason is that it is important for you to understand their complexity in order to understand two areas of responsibility; both of which involve the Congress as well as the Executive branch.

One involves resources and how they are used. State's training of security officers (RSOs and ARSOs in the jargon) has improved greatly in my opinion. Diplomatic security (DS) is making an effort to include in its training for ARSOs an understanding of how they must fit mission accomplishment into security. The American Academy of Diplomacy, of which I am president, has been pleased and honored to help in this.

I do believe that more thought needs to be given to how we train ambassadors and senior diplomatic managers to make decisions about risk. It is wise that ambassadors should pay attention to the advice of their RSO. But the ultimate responsibility for mission accomplishment belongs to the ambassador. It neither can nor should it be subordinated automatically to the security officer. The judgments are sometimes difficult and often turn on delicate balances between threat and possible mitigation. I have gotten experience through multiple critical threat posts. I have been shot at more than many RSOs. The average ambassador is unlikely to have the dubious benefit of this experience. I recommend more training be given to ambassadors, deputy chiefs of mission and principle officers of separate posts in how to make such decisions and how to work with their RSO.

There remains a critical area of responsibility to consider. That is the need to leave space for decisions in the field about the balance between risk and benefit. A zero risk approach, a search for fault that becomes overly politicized and turns into a "gotcha" game will increasingly create a political climate in Washington that is counter-productive for achieving our foreign political goals. Senior officials of this and future administrations, fearing responsibility for whatever goes wrong, will reinforce the climate that is already too far advanced in which our diplomatic personnel spend their time behind walls and looking at computer screens rather than getting out acquiring knowledge and exerting influence.

A great many of my diplomatic colleagues are prepared to accept risk. That is why the Foreign Service and USAID have been able for years to fill their positions in Iraq and Afghanistan with volunteers. Many, there and in other countries already feel their ability to do their jobs is excessively hampered by our own security restrictions. Many are willing to accept somewhat more risk to accomplish their mission. Not every risk is worth taking. Diplomats are not

soldiers. But neither can America's diplomatic interests be achieved from behind walls and razor wire.

Making the choices about how much risk to take is difficult. The price for getting it wrong or simply for bad luck is serious enough as it is. It should not be made more difficult by a Washington culture that stifles field judgment in the interest of keeping Washington officials from bureaucratic risk.

It is correct to do a post mortem when a tragedy such as Benghazi occurs. It is right to look at what officials knew and why they made the judgments they did. After all, it was Ambassador Stevens who made the judgment that he should travel to Benghazi.

But if reasoned inquiry turns into domestic politics there will be long term damage to our ability to execute foreign policy. A reasoned inquiry asks how to adapt but must also ask how to avoid over-reaction. The policy costs of security enhancements and restrictions need to be weighed along with the risks to personnel. These are difficult responsibilities to accept in Washington. They are even more difficult in the field where the consequences of getting a decision wrong can be paid in blood. Yet that is exactly why I believe the Congress and the Executive have a mutual responsibility to support reasoned decision making in the field by our senior diplomats as well as giving them the resources to be as safe as possible.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear. I will be pleased to try to respond to your questions.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you very much, Ambassador.

And thank you to all of our witnesses.

I had read your written remarks. In my opening statement, I had referenced a New York Times op-ed by Ambassador Bushnell who had served in Kenya during the horrific bombing of our Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and she entitled that “Our Diplomats Deserve Better.”

In that op-ed, she discusses the dangers and the risks for those who pursue diplomacy on behalf of our country and acknowledges that not every danger can be prevented, but she offers some advice, and I wanted your comments on it.

She says, The Foreign Service is short on people, and those people are rushed into the field short of training. We build concrete fortresses when we have to, but we don’t invest in the mobile communications and security technology that would protect diplomats when they leave the Embassy, as they must. What kinds of technology systems, training and deployments do we need to get results through diplomacy in the 21st century? She says, These are difficult questions that will remain unanswered while diplomats disappear from public view once again until the next time someone dies. Then we see the same sorry responses all over again.

So I ask our witnesses, can you address the questions that she references? What kind of technology systems and training and deployment do we need in this new century that keeps our diplomatic personnel safe as they seek to advance U.S. interests abroad?

Mr. Young.

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you for the question. During my remarks, I spoke about the use of social media—

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Could you put that just a little bit closer.

Mr. YOUNG. Certainly. Is that better? During my remarks, I spoke about the use of social media analytics as a way of monitoring not just what is happening beyond the walls of the mission, but also to gauge the intensity of the language being used to determine how violent protests are becoming or perhaps if there are plans afoot that we need to know about. I think that it would be useful to establish some kind of study to look at how that could best be done, by leveraging existing capabilities within the government, such as the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, which has an excellent way of predicting the outbreak of infectious disease. Anyway, that is it.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Doctor?

Mr. CARAFANO. Thank you. I spent 25 years of my life being a risk manager. Every day when I was in the Army, I planned how to take men and women into battle knowing that some of them could be injured or killed and knowing that my job was to figure out how to minimize that risk and at the same time get the mission done. That is just the nature of the security business.

One of the reasons why I emphasized the four questions that I did in my testimony was that that will help us really understand was it is all about risk taking. Was the risk taking prudent and at all levels of government, from the highest to the lowest? That

I think is really the most invaluable knowledge of all, because we need to learn how we can—risk managers are always going to have to deal with the resources they have and the conditions they face. So the best resource we always have is a brain that knows how to be a prudent risk taker.

That said, in answer to your second question, the other great value I think would be of answering these four questions is it will identify a menu of things where if we had had another tool in the tool kit or a different tool in the tool kit, how may that have helped in the range of these things? How may it have helped to do counterterrorism or early warning better? How may it have helped to do risk mitigation better? How may it have helped us plan on how we could bring a resource in better? Or how could we have used the resources we have available more effectively to integrate them and operationalize them?

So, again, if you don't get the answers to the questions, you are not going to be able to know if these things—what is the most prudent thing I can do to make me better prepared to respond.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. NEUMANN. Thank you. On the making of judgments about risk, which is one I have had to do also in various capacities, the only point I wanted to add is as you find the answers to the specifics of Benghazi, please remember to leave enough room for people in the field to make decisions, understanding that sometimes they may make a wrong decision; sometimes they may make a bad one; and sometimes they may just run out of luck. But we have got to have room to do that. Otherwise we will all be in our bunkers, and you will not be well informed about much of anything.

On your second question about what we need to do about training, that was worth coming here and a long wait just to answer that question, because in my day job at the American Academy of Diplomacy, we did an extensive report about 1½ years ago on professional education and training for diplomats where we have quite a few lapses and a lot more that needs to be done. I call that report to your attention because I think it is still important. But one of its key conclusions is that we still need to fund a training reserve or float for the State Department if we are to engage in long-term training. There is a huge difference.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, gentlemen.

I am so pleased to turn to my good friend Mr. Berman for his questions.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and I thank all of you. In a very short time, you came with a lot of sort of metrics for analysis here.

I want to follow, your Syria reference was a very interesting one. There for quite a while after the protests and demonstrations started against Assad, we kept our Embassy open and our Ambassador there and implementing a policy that the administration had. It was quite evident he performed a very useful role in some of the actions he took, and my assumption is in the information he provided back to Washington. There came a point where I guess, under the way you guys are looking at it, the risks of his safety

and survival and other personnel there became so great that we were required to pull him out.

Now, Ambassador Neumann, you raised the question of assuming there becomes a point we hope when Assad falls and something replaces it, how important our being able to have information and, therefore, how important our need for diplomatic posts and personnel there are, having large implications for an entire region.

Mr. Young says unless you can rely—his first point was you got have got to have a local military protection operation there. He didn't say, if you don't, don't go there, but the way he said it made me think that was the implication. If you can't rely on it, you shouldn't even open up a post there. What is your reaction to what he said?

And is that what you meant, Mr. Young?

Mr. YOUNG. Yes, that is what I meant, sir.

Mr. BERMAN. And given all the compelling arguments for reestablishing outposts in Syria at that time, how do you deal with that, Ambassador Neumann?

Mr. NEUMANN. I follow this with a good deal of interest because our Ambassador there, Robert Ford, was my deputy in Bahrain and my colleague in Baghdad and a very close friend of mine. I know some of the decisions he made and why he made them. And the basic point is that you can't make those decisions on a flip-switch basis from a distance. You will have to make them on the ground with a very high focus on detail.

There may well not be a government. We have to hire local security. We depended for years in Lebanon, even during much of the Civil War, on local security which we hired, trained and vetted. I depended on local guards in Algeria when we lived under a blanket death threat to all foreigners for my moves around town with a few Americans to supervise them. We had some risk mitigation, I won't bother you with the details of, to make sure that we didn't get betrayed by people who might have somebody's mother at home with a knife at her throat. So there can be a point at which you just can't do it, as Ambassador Ford found in Syria.

Mr. BERMAN. By the way, did he make that decision or did Washington make that decision?

Mr. NEUMANN. He was highly involved in it. And it came to a point where there was a larger risk to the total mission that he felt he couldn't expose his staff to, even though he was prepared to take a fair amount of risk himself and did in several cases.

So my only point is I don't think you can make that decision in advance or on a very general basis of is it going to be risky or not. It is going to be risky. The question is, can you mitigate the risks? And then you are going to have to work down through the mitigation in detail.

Mr. BERMAN. Let me just quickly ask in my remaining time, do you know enough now to know whether it was a mistake to put a temporary consulate compound in Benghazi, or in hindsight, which is always great, or do we still not know enough to know whether that was the right call?

Mr. NEUMANN. I don't think I know enough. I would frame the question that needs to be answered in part as to whether the mission or anybody around the government had any information of the



size of attack that eventually overwhelmed them. If that threat information was there, then obviously, we were overmatched. If that threat information was not there, you deal with the threats you have got as best you know them. If you had to deal everywhere in the world with every level of hypothetical threat, we could not operate anywhere.

Mr. BERMAN. That is why it is called risk management.

Mr. NEUMANN. Yes. And the trouble is when you run out of luck or you make a bad call, you know, then you haven't managed it well. But the whole problem of that is you are always managing, as Dr. Carafano said, a level of risk and danger, which is why I buried a few friends.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Berman.

Mrs. Schmidt of Ohio is recognized.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Thank you.

I want to thank all three of you for your testimony.

I have certainly learned a lot. My question to all three of you is once we get a clear idea of why the situation happened and the miscommunication that apparently occurred during and after, we will have a better chance to understand future opportunities to mitigate the risk. Am I correct on that?

Mr. YOUNG. I would assume so, yes.

Mr. NEUMANN. You may. You may not. The generals are often accused of fighting the last war; the civilians are going to have the same problem. So we will have a better idea of how to deal with certain kinds of threats, whether that will be the threat that comes to us.

Also, Libya poses some interesting issues. It is close enough to the Mediterranean; there are ways you could, I suppose, have had military reinforcements. We are going to have a lot of posts in Africa where you won't have those kinds of options. So there will certainly be lessons learned that will be valuable. Whether they will reach the totality of the threat, I would doubt.

Mr. CARAFANO. You know, I do think that with the publicly available information, it is a fair conclusion to say that this was a predictable and reasonable threat. I also think it is a predictable and reasonable threat that we could likely see again a U.S. diplomatic facility in a high-threatened environment in the future.

That said, I don't think there is enough publicly available information at this point to conclude what is the best combination of counterterrorism changes, risk reduction, better contingency planning, better crisis response, which would have mitigated the risks they faced in abuse Benghazi.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. My second part to that is once the air clears and we get a better sense of what happened, political rhetoric will continue. And I ask all of you, because you are very level-headed, is to find ways to get out what you believe is the right response of what we should be doing. You write for The Examiner, Doctor, you have an opportunity because you have the power of the pen, but so do both of you.

I am going to be a citizen after the first of the year, and I am going to be sitting back in my chair wondering what is going on and I would like to hear it from some level-headed sources. Thank you.

Mr. CARAFANO. I do coordinate the national security and foreign policy research at the Heritage Foundation, and we will be assessing the results of the publicly available information, whether it is from the ALB or other sources, and I am providing evaluation of that and if it is adequate and if the recommendations that are drawn from that are adequate.

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Good. Get it out there to the public. Thank you. Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mrs. Schmidt.

And Mr. Sherman, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade is recognized.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The best way to mourn our heroes is to avoid the tendency here in Washington to politicize things and to look at Dr. Carafano's approach of cost-benefit. We have got to do everything possible so that we have the maximum State Department effectiveness while the minimum risk to our personnel. And the most fitting way to honor our heroes is to have a hearing that is designed to do just that and to fix the problem to the extent it can be fixed.

And this hearing, I think, has done a lot of that. It has also had some unnecessary political attacks. They call it the fog of war for a reason, but the military is designed to deal with the fog of war. To think that you always get it right when you are subject to a war-like attack and you are not even a war-fighting operation is absurd.

Ambassador Susan Rice has done an outstanding job. Yes, she presented to us the intelligence provided to her by the intelligence community. I would point out that many State Department officials came into this room and presented the intelligence community's views on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. That is not a reason to criticize those who are presenting.

And what strikes me as utterly bizarre, because I understand politics perhaps better than those of you who focus on foreign policy, is in what bizarre universe is there political gain by trying to convince the American people that there aren't armed terrorist groups in the most lawless cities in the Middle East? No one attempted to convince the American people of that. No one tried to say, oh, no, we couldn't have an al-Qaeda type group operating.

But also in what bizarre universe is it politically helpful to tell the American people that any old YouTube could be a spark on a tinderbox that causes thousands of Muslims in the Middle East to charge into our armed security, giving up their own lives in a few cases, because they are so angry at a YouTube? I would say that would be an even more dangerous world to think that that would be reflective of any significant portion of opinion on the Arab street.

The fact is we do have both problems. There are armed terrorist groups, and there are thousands of people who hate us a lot, and the slightest provocation or YouTube video can set them off.

Dr. Carafano, and perhaps others will answer this as well, we had in Benghazi a situation where perhaps dozens of well-armed attackers went to our diplomatic facility. The host country didn't provide significant help for many, many hours.

Is there any plan—I mean, I realize in Iraq, we have the most enormous Embassy in the world, but assuming we are dealing with

what could possibly be done in consulates and temporary diplomatic facilities in secondary cities in relatively small countries, is there anything we can do that would allow us to deal with dozens of well-armed, planned, coordinated attack while not getting any help from the host government for many hours?

Mr. CARAFANO. Congressman, you raised a really excellent point, and again, from the publicly available information, I think your conclusion is reasonable that given the level of security that was available, even adding people wouldn't have been sufficient to mitigate the risk of that base being overrun. I think that appears to be a very reasonable and accurate conclusion.

But that is why I laid out the four questions, because then you have to ask the other questions, given that, that is a very reasonable conclusion and we knew that beforehand, was what these people were doing, was that so important that running that risk was valid? And if it was, we also, we never leave people alone so, if that was going to happen and the worst-case scenario did happen, did we think through, and again—I can't tell this from the publicly available information—how are we going to deal with that, and did we act on our contingency plans? And again, that is why I laid out the stress we need the answers to all four of the questions to really draw prudent conclusions.

Mr. SHERMAN. I don't know if any other witness has a strong desire to answer that question, and my time has expired so regardless of what that—

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Sherman.

And thank you, Mrs. Schmidt, and thank you to our witnesses for excellent testimony and good answers, and our committee looks forward to continuing to examine the risks that our U.S. personnel undertake as they are deployed to dangerous environments and the risks inherent in operating places like Benghazi, compounded by the absence of clearly defined and capable support from host countries remain a very complex set of circumstances.

So we remember them every day, and we thank the men and women who are proudly serving our Nation in many different circumstances throughout the world.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your testimony, and to our members, and the committee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:09 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]



# A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

**Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman**

November 13, 2012

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building **(and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.hcfa.house.gov>)**:

**DATE:** Thursday, November 15, 2012  
**TIME:** 10:00 a.m.  
**SUBJECT:** Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012 and How to Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts, Part I

**WITNESSES:** Panel I  
  
Mr. Michael Courts  
Acting Director  
International Affairs and Trade  
Government Accountability Office

Panel II  
  
Mr. William Young  
Senior Policy Analyst  
RAND Corporation  
  
James Jay Carafano, Ph.D.  
Director  
Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies  
The Heritage Foundation

The Honorable Ronald E. Neumann  
President  
American Academy of Diplomacy

**By Direction of the Chairman**

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.*



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date 11/15/12 Room 2172 RHOB

Starting Time 10:05 a.m. Ending Time 1:08 p.m.

Recesses  ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Rep. Heana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Joe Wilson, & Rep. Jean Schmidt*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Executive (closed) Session

Stenographic Record

Televised

TITLE OF HEARING:

*Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012 and How to Prevent it from Happening at Other Frontline Posts, Part I*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Attendance Sheet attached.*

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Rep. Howard Coble (NC)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No

*(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)*

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

- Rep. Smith (SFR)*
- Rep. Poe (SFR)*
- Rep. Bilirakis (SFR)*
- Rep. Kelly (SFR)*
- Rep. Connolly (2 SFR's)*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_

or  
TIME ADJOURNED 1:08 p.m.

  
Jean Carroll, Director of Committee Operations

Hearing/Briefing Title: **Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012  
and How to Prevent it from Happening at Other Frontline Posts, Part I**

Date: 11/15/2012

Present	Member
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Christopher Smith, NJ
X	Dan Burton, IN
	Elton Gallegly, CA
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
	Donald Manzullo, IL
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Ron Paul, TX
	Mike Pence, IN
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Connie Mack, FL
X	Jeff Fortenberry, NE
	Michael McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Gus M. Bilirakis, FL
X	Jean Schmidt, OH
X	Bill Johnson, OH
X	David Rivera, FL
X	Mike Kelly, PA
X	Tim Griffin, AK
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
	Ann Marie Buerkle, NY
X	Renee Ellmers, NC
X	Robert Turner, NY

Present	Member
X	Howard L. Berman, CA
X	Gary L. Ackerman, NY
X	Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, AS
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Eliot Engel, NY
	Gregory Meeks, NY
	Russ Carnahan, MO
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerry Connolly, VA
X	Ted Deutch, FL
	Dennis Cardoza, CA
	Ben Chandler, KY
	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Allyson Schwartz, PA
	Chris Murphy, CT
X	Frederica Wilson, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI



**Opening Statement**  
**“Israel’s Right to Defend Itself: Implications**  
**For Regional Security and U.S. Interests”**  
**Representative Christopher H. Smith**  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
November 29, 2012  
Rayburn 2172

An escalating clash between the State of Israel and Islamist militants in Gaza has been quelled for the moment, but the cease-fire remains fragile and dependent on interests that have little to do with a peaceful resolution of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict.

Hamas was not holding its own in this conflict despite its obnoxious use of missiles aimed at civilians that are reminiscent of Nazi U-2 attacks on London during World War II. Israel’s Iron Dome anti-missile system is reported to have been 85% successful in engaging missiles headed for population areas up to 70 kilometers from their launch sites. A ground war launched by Israel could have further degraded the ability of Hamas and other Palestinian groups to threaten Israel’s population with continuing missile attacks by enabling further Israeli strikes on Palestinian missile storage facilities. So the Hamas concession to temporary peace can in no way be construed as a commitment to peace, but rather a realization of the danger of defeat. Paradoxically, the truce actually offers Hamas an opportunity to restock and reposition missiles.

Egypt appears to have negotiated a cease-fire to at least appear to maintain the country’s position as a peace-broker between Israel and the Palestinians and preclude a potential cutoff of U.S. assistance. Last year, the United States provided \$1.3 billion in military assistance and \$250 million in economic aid to Egypt. At a time when President Morsi’s government is facing a backlash over his Iran-like seizure of executive power, an Israeli-Palestinian war next door would be a complication he doesn’t need. However, a significant portion of his population is supportive of Hamas, as is Morsi himself, who accused Israel of committing an “assault on humanity” prior to negotiating a cease-fire.

So the cease-fire has no certainty of lasting beyond the needs of Hamas or Egypt’s Islamist government.



Remarks Prepared for Congressman Gus Bilirakis  
One Minute – Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012 and How to  
Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts

November 15, 2012

Thank you Madam Chairwoman for organizing this important hearing regarding the tragic events  
in Benghazi, Libya.

I would like to express my extreme disappointment and frustration in the way this matter has  
been handled by the Administration and by Secretary Clinton, who has now twice declined  
invitations to testify before this committee about the attacks leading to the deaths of Ambassador  
Stevens and three other Americans.

While Secretary Clinton and President Obama have both claimed responsibility for this event, we  
are still no closer to receiving an answer as to why it occurred.

The American people deserve to know the truth about whether State Department officials had  
previously determined that the Benghazi facility had sufficient security, how the Administration  
dealt with reported pleas for increased assistance from personnel on the ground and why the  
Administration initially blamed the attack on a video rather than acknowledging it for what it  
was: a terrorist attack.

The American people want answers and deserve to hear them directly from the source – those  
who made the decisions on September 11.



Rep. Mike Kelly  
Foreign Affairs Full Committee Hearing, "Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on  
September 11, 2012, and How to Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts, Part I."  
Opening Statement

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have both claimed responsibility for the Benghazi situation. Yesterday at a White House press conference the president said:

"And you know, we're after an election now. I think it is important for us to find out exactly what happened in Benghazi, and I'm happy to cooperate in any ways that Congress wants. We have provided every bit of information that we have, and we will continue to provide information. And we've got a full-blown investigation, and all that information will be disgorged to Congress."


Yet the administration has failed to provide any witnesses who were part of the State Department's chain of command with respect to diplomatic security to appear at this hearing, such as the following officials:

- Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State,
- Patrick F. Kennedy, Under Secretary for Management,
- Eric Boswell, Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security,
- Scott Bultrowicz, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Director of the Diplomatic Security Service,
- Charlene Lamb, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and
- James P. Bacigalupo, Regional Director, Near East Asia Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

This administration has also failed to respond to a letter I sent on behalf of 53 members of the House of Representatives containing detailed questions, based on public statements of this administration and the sworn testimony of U.S. personnel on the ground in Libya, regarding the security failures in the months preceding the September 11th terrorist attack on the U.S. compound in Benghazi. Madam Chairman, I request unanimous consent to enter the letter into the record at this time.

Furthermore, this administration has failed to fully implement the recommendations of the 2009 Government Accountability Office report, *State Department: Diplomatic Security's Recent Growth Warrants Strategic Review*, GAO-10-156. This administration has refused to conduct a full "strategic review" of U.S. diplomatic security as recommended by this report.

Ultimately this administration failed to heed the warning signs and respond adequately to the growing danger to the U.S. mission in Libya, particularly in Benghazi, culminating in the tragic deaths of Ambassador Chris Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods and Sean Smith. This hearing will shed light on what should have been clear to this administration: the need for increased security at Benghazi and other frontline posts. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.



The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

**HCFA Full Committee Hearing: Benghazi and Beyond: What Went Wrong on September 11, 2012 and How to Prevent it from Happening at other Frontline Posts, Part I**  
**Thursday, November 15, 2012**  
**10am**

The attack on our consulate and murder of four Americans<sup>1</sup> in Benghazi was a tragedy that reverberated across our country. As we speak, multiple U.S. entities are investigating the circumstances around the attack, with new information trickling in each day. On October 4, the U.S. military airlifted a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) team into Benghazi. That same day, the State Department's Accountability Review Board (ARB), led by Ambassador Thomas Pickering, convened to begin its review of the Benghazi attack. Given the dynamic circumstances in the immediate aftermath of the attack and the existence of multiple ongoing investigations, it is unfortunate that partisan rhetoric has colored the ongoing discussion. Unfortunately, there is a group of individuals that have decided to attack the Administration on anything and everything relating to this tragedy in the hopes that one of these attacks will stick.

Despite its measured approach, the Administration received partisan criticism for not immediately classifying the Benghazi attack as a terrorist attack. On September 19, a key Administration official testified before the Senate Homeland Security Committee that the attack on the consulate was indeed a terrorist attack. Despite the resolution of this issue, six days later, eight Republican Members of Congress sent a letter to the President implying that certain Administration officials misled the public. In an attempt to further escalate this manufactured controversy, a Republican Member of Congress called for Ambassador Rice's resignation. The notion that a public official ought to label an attack in a certain way before the intelligence community gathers and analyzes the facts is preposterous. It is a shame that partisan rhetoric has superseded the need for objective analysis.

Any investigation into the Benghazi terrorist attack ought to take into account the resources the United States committed to embassy security. Upon closer inspection of the numbers, it is clear that the current House majority has led the charge to lower embassy security funding by almost half a billion dollars below the Administration's request since FY2011.<sup>2</sup> The Republican majority advocated for this half a billion dollars in cuts despite the repeated warnings from career State Department officials. For example, Ambassador Richard Neumann, Ambassador to Afghanistan during the George W. Bush Administration, and one of our witnesses today, told a Senate subcommittee in 2009 that "it is time to stop flinching from the requirement to pay for the mitigation of the dangers we ask our personnel to accept."<sup>3</sup> His warnings went unheeded by the Republican majority. The Members who voted to lower security funding for our embassies and consulates are the same Members who have saturated the news cycle recently asking, "Could this happen again?"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The four were: Amb. Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods.

<sup>2</sup> There are two accounts: the Worldwide Security Protection (WSP) account, and the Embassy Security, Construction, & Maintenance (ESCM) account. In FY2011, the Republican House majority voted for a total of \$127.5 million in cuts; in FY2012, the total cuts for both accounts were \$330.55. The FY2011 & FY2012 total reduction approved by House Republicans was therefore \$458.95 million below the Administration request.

<sup>3</sup> Hon. Ronald E. Neumann, *Testimony Before the Senate Homeland Security Subcommittee on Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia*, (transcript), 22, [http://psm.du.edu/media/documents/congressional\\_comm/senate\\_homeland\\_security/us\\_senate\\_homeland\\_security\\_hearing\\_dec\\_9\\_2009.pdf](http://psm.du.edu/media/documents/congressional_comm/senate_homeland_security/us_senate_homeland_security_hearing_dec_9_2009.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> E.g. the Chairman of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee during an Oct. 2, 2012 interview on CNN.

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

These same Members have criticized the Administration for how it reacted in the aftermath of the attack, despite the fact that intelligence professionals have disagreed with the criticisms. In a recent *Atlantic* article, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analyst during the Bush Administration describes the intelligence collection and analysis process:

When intelligence from a conflict zone is assessed, the results are not clear, linear, or static. Rather, 21st-century intelligence analysis—particularly when it is occurring in real-time and on something high-profile—can be messy, obtuse and, above all, evolving.<sup>5</sup>


As the Pickering Commission and FBI continue their separate investigations into the terrorist attack against our consulate, political interests ought to stop trying to co-opt this tragedy. Prejudging the situation and creating a political circus to gain points would serve no one well.

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<sup>5</sup> Aki Peritz, "How Critics of Obama's Libya Response Profoundly Misunderstand Intelligence," *The Atlantic*, October 2, 2012, <file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/HAbhasi.US/Desktop/MAIN/HCFEA%208%20Hearings/10.10.12%20OGR%20Libya%20embassy/How%20Critics%20of%20Obama%27s%20Libya%20Re-sponse%20Profoundly%20Misunderstand%20Intelligence%20-%20Aki%20Peritz%20-%20The%20Atlantic.htm>.

[NOTE: The prepared statement submitted to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, October 10, 2012, by Mr. Eric Allan Nordstrom, Regional Security Officer, Tripoli, Libya, and submitted for the record of this hearing by the Honorable Gerald E. Connolly is not reprinted here but is available in committee records.]



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE TED POE, A  
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

TED POE  
2ND DISTRICT, TEXAS



COMMITTEES:  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
JUDICIARY  
FOUNDER OF CONGRESSIONAL  
VICTIM'S RIGHTS CAUCUS

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4302

October 31, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Panetta:

As I travel around my district, I hear again and again from my constituents about their concern regarding the tragic attack on our consulate in Benghazi. One common inquiry I receive is about the origin of weapons used in the attack. In light of this, I would appreciate it if you could please respond to the below questions.

1. Is there any evidence that U.S. weapons were used in the attack on our consulate in Benghazi?
2. Did the United States or our allies furnish any rebel groups in Libya with weapons during the uprising against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi? If so, what kinds of weapons were supplied? Were they small arms? Shoulder-fired rockets?
3. If weapons were furnished to any rebels, what kinds of accounting were done to ensure that the weapons were controlled and did not fall into the hands of extremists? What actions are we taken to ensure that any weapons that were furnished to the Libyan opposition are being secured?
4. If weapons were furnished to any rebels, was Ansar Al Sharia one of the groups that were furnished with weapons? If they were not directly furnished weapons, is it possible that they acquired them indirectly from those who were?

Thank you for time and attention to this critical matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

TED POE  
Member of Congress  
TEXAS

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