

Interim Progress Update

The Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi

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Chairman's Message

The House of Representatives created and authorized the Select Committee on Benghazi to provide the final, definitive accounting of what happened before, during and after the terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya, that left four brave Americans dead. The Speaker of the House of Representatives was unmistakably clear when he constituted the Committee that he wanted the Committee to pursue all relevant facts wherever they lead.

As Chairman I pledged an investigation worthy of the sacrifice made by these men and worthy of the trust of my fellow citizens. That remains my pledge. It is a promise I made to the family members of those who were killed representing our country. It is the promise I make whenever I am asked about Benghazi all across our country.

In upholding that promise, the Committee has interviewed eyewitnesses never before interviewed, obtained tens of thousands of documents from the State Department and White House never before provided, and reviewed FBI reports specific to the interrogation and prosecution of Abu Khattala. In addition to interviewing witnesses never before interviewed, these interviews have led to additional witnesses and additional lines of inquiry, which must be followed.

The Committee, however, faces obstacles and frustrations. It is difficult to conduct a fact-centric congressional investigation when the Administration impedes the Committee's progress by repeatedly failing to answer the Committee's requests or to provide information in a timely manner. Further, the legislative branch's constitutional toolbox seems inadequate to uphold our task in seeking the truth.

Although I knew it would lead to understandable criticism, I have chosen to conduct the majority of this investigation using transcribed interviews, which are conducted privately, rather than public hearings. Transcribed interviews afford more time to both the person asking the questions as well as the person providing the answers. Simply put, if you want to uncover the most facts, you would choose something other than 10 minutes of questioning by a member of Congress. So while tremendous progress has been made, both in the quantity and quality of transcribed interviews, those interviews must remain private until such time as a final report has been written in fairness to both the conduct of a proper investigation and to all relevant parties. I have made this a fundamental principle for the Committee and its staff because serious investigations do not leak information or make selective releases of information without full and proper context.

While our investigatory approach has uncovered new witnesses, new documents, new facts and will result in the most detailed and complete accounting of what happened in Benghazi, the frustration that some feel at not seeing the work unfold on television or reading about new discoveries in print is understandable. The approach we are taking, while short on

drama, aims to discover all of the relevant facts and to be long on credibility when the final report is written. The Committee now must also consider certain issues related to whether the former Secretary of State's unusual email arrangement with herself, which even the State Department itself has now called "unacceptable," has affected either the factual record on Benghazi or response to congressional inquiries more broadly. Ultimately, this Committee's interest is in ensuring all relevant and material information related to Libya and Benghazi that was in the personal custody of the former Secretary of State has been returned to the public domain.

The largest impediment to being able to write the final, definitive accounting of what happened before, during and after the terrorist attacks in Benghazi is the Executive Branch itself. Some have suggested the Committee should make use of compulsory process (subpoena) rather than letters, requests for information or compliance hearings. As I have said before, the power to subpoena is only as good as the power to compel compliance. The constitutional tools provided the Legislative Branch are inadequate and time-consuming. Compelling compliance with subpoenas requires either the cooperation of the Executive Branch – particularly the United States Attorney – the very entity from which we seek the information and an unlikely ally, or pursuing document production from the Executive Branch via civil contempt, a laborious, slow process and counterproductive to the goal of an expeditious investigation.

In the context of this investigation, neither appears likely to get the Committee closer to the documents requested in a reasonable timeframe. The Committee has tried both having and threatening public compliance hearings. The curious response from the Executive Branch is that preparing for a public compliance hearing will result in even more delay on the production of requested documents.

In addition to highlighting the public's right to know substantial pieces of information still to be disclosed, the House should also consider motivating the Executive Branch through the appropriations process. The Committee has shared its frustration with both House and Senate appropriators in an effort to incent the Executive Branch to comply with legitimate document requests. If the Administration is seriously interested in assisting this Committee in concluding its work as efficiently and effectively as possible, a significant improvement in compliance efforts is necessary.

Taken as a whole, the Committee's record and the interim update provided in this document show the Committee is focused on building the most comprehensive record and presenting all the facts related to the Benghazi terrorist attacks. My goal has always been – and continues to be – to conclude the investigation in 2015. It is increasingly apparent our ability to meet that goal depends on the cooperation of the Administration. The level of cooperation to date has been underwhelming. That must change.

Executive Summary

At the direction of the House, the Committee has undertaken a broad review of issues relating to the 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya. The Committee's jurisdiction is designed to facilitate an independent and comprehensive review of the attacks across the spectrum of Executive Branch agencies. The Committee began its work by assessing the record previously developed by House committees and obtaining compliance with still outstanding document and information requests previously issued by those committees. The Committee has also conducted interviews with a number of witnesses with respect to the discrete events in Benghazi and the broader issues the House has charged the Committee to review. Both efforts have been impacted by the pace of Executive Branch compliance. For example, the Committee just this month received more than 4,000 pages of documents responsive to a subpoena initially issued in August 2013.

Despite these Executive Branch delays, the Committee has assembled a substantial amount of new information not previously available to Congress through document production and interviews with eyewitnesses never before obtained by a committee.

From these assessments, the Committee has sought and moved ahead with targeted requests for additional information through document, communications and interview requests. The Committee has issued more than a dozen document requests, a number of which remain outstanding, though partial compliance has been received for more than half. The Committee has held more than 30 meetings and briefings with Executive Branch officials and has identified another 60 current and former Executive Branch officials to interview, including key individuals who have never before been questioned by Congress. These are in addition to the interviews the Committee has already conducted.

An additional focus of the Committee has been to address and improve agency response times to congressional requests. In certain instances, document requests have been pending for almost two years. This type of response time is not conducive to a timely investigation. Moreover, recent revelations by the former Secretary of State raise questions about the comprehensiveness of the production by the State Department and whether the Committee has in its possession the complete universe of information relevant to the investigation. Despite these obstacles, the Committee continues to uncover and integrate new information into its investigation. Keeping these factors in mind, the Committee aims to conclude its evidence-gathering as expeditiously as possible and issue a final report soon thereafter.

Introduction

Nearly three years ago, on September 11-12, 2012, the United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya were the target of terrorist attacks. These attacks resulted in the deaths of four Americans: Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, Glen Doherty and the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, Chris Stevens. The gravity of the attacks raised serious questions regarding the U.S. presence in Benghazi, Libya, particularly as those questions related to the policies, decisions and activities of the Administration and relevant Executive Branch agencies before, during and after the attacks.

For nearly two years, Congress sought answers to these questions. However, the Administration's varied responses exposed jurisdictional limits encountered by the standing committees. Moreover, these responses revealed a less than complete or transparent accounting about the attacks.

The unresolved questions necessitated the formation of a single committee that could cross the spectrum of relevant Executive Branch agencies to fully investigate the policies, decisions and activities before, during and after the attacks. Consequently, the House formed, on a bipartisan basis, the Select Committee on the Events Surrounding the 2012 Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi.

House Resolution (H.Res.) 567 of the 113th Congress, outlining the Committee's jurisdiction, was approved on May 8, 2014.¹ H.Res. 567 instructed the Committee to conduct a complete investigation of all relevant Executive Branch agencies and issue a definitive, final report on the events surrounding the September 11-12, 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya. To this end, the House equipped the Committee with broad jurisdiction to accomplish this directive, including evaluating the Administration's cooperation with congressional investigations.

The Committee's investigation is focused on uncovering answers to a number of issues. Among them, three broad questions are prominent: (1) why did the U.S. have a presence in Benghazi, Libya despite the security risks; (2) what actions did relevant agencies take during the attacks to protect U.S. personnel and facilities; and (3) what was the Administration's response and explanation for the attacks and how did its position evolve? Each of these areas is targeted toward forming a better understanding of the events that transpired before, during and after the terrorist attacks. In answering these questions, the Committee will conduct an investigation based on its own review of the facts and evidence before it, and will follow those facts wherever they may lead.

The Committee has reviewed a substantial volume of information previously produced to the House and has requested and received new information. More than 20,000 pages of

¹ The Committee was reauthorized through H.Res. 5 on January 5, 2015.

emails and documents never before released to Congress have been produced by the State Department. The new material includes emails that were sent to or received by the former Secretary of State relevant to Benghazi, as well as documents and emails that were part of the State Department's Accountability Review Board (ARB) proceeding. In addition, hundreds of pages of emails never before seen by Congress have been produced by the White House. The Department of Justice and the Intelligence Community have also produced documents. Further, the Committee has interviewed State Department and CIA personnel, including survivors of the Benghazi terrorist attacks who had never been interviewed by previous committees, as well as others who have been able to provide indispensable firsthand details of the U.S. presence in Benghazi, Libya.

This interim update serves to detail the Committee's work, the obstacles the Committee has encountered, and the Committee's plan to complete its investigation.

The Committee's Initial Work

Initially, the Committee identified three priorities to move the investigation forward: (A) establishing the Committee, including hiring a highly-qualified staff and the necessary infrastructure to manage highly sensitive national security information; (B) assessing the information provided by the previous committees of jurisdiction; and (C) identifying and obtaining information that had not yet been provided to Congress.

The Committee's first task was to establish the capabilities necessary to conduct its work. This included hiring a highly-qualified staff to ensure the completeness of the Committee's investigation and establishing the necessary infrastructure to manage and facilitate review of highly sensitive national security information. The Committee retained a highly qualified group of investigators whose experience includes a mix of senior congressional and Executive Branch experience, as well as a variety of investigative, oversight and subject matter expertise across relevant institutions. As one example, the Committee's Chief Counsel previously served as the Judge Advocate General for the U.S. Army. Three former Assistant United States Attorneys are on staff, with a combined 45 years' experience as federal prosecutors. Other Committee employees have experience with the Department of State, CIA, Department of Defense, DEA and House Ethics, to name a few.

Notwithstanding the substantial background of the Committee staff with national security and investigative work, the pace of the Committee's work has been, and continues to be, substantially impacted by the unique challenges of its national security work. Completing the necessary security clearances – even for personnel who held positions requiring access to highly sensitive national security information immediately prior to joining the Committee – has limited the Committee's initial capability to fully review documents and materials. Similarly, delays in receiving Executive Branch approval for the Committee's secure infrastructure have substantially impacted the pace of its work. The latter category most notably includes the Committee's secure system for managing electronic documents, which has not yet been approved by the Executive Branch even after months of setup and review. The issue has

become so complex as to require the Committee to retain an outside contractor simply to ensure that the necessary administrative requirements will be met. The Committee is developing a state-of-the-art document management system for classified material and trusts that this work – once successful – will establish a template for future oversight efforts.

The Committee's second task was to review documents and materials transmitted from other House Committees pursuant to H.Res. 567. The Committee has sought to evaluate the information included in the transmitted materials, both to identify relevant issues and evidence and to determine the nature and completeness of previous productions by the Executive Branch. Consistent with the directive set out in H.Res. 567, approximately 50,000 pages of documents were provided to the Committee. The Committee manually reviewed and evaluated on a page-by-page basis reports, transcripts of depositions and hearings, memoranda, classified and unclassified documents, and other information not cited or used by the standing committees in their investigations.

In addition to reviewing the approximately 50,000 pages of documents, many of which were duplicate documents produced to multiple committees, the Committee assessed an additional 25,000 pages of documents that were requested during its initial evaluative work. These documents represented a collection of material the State Department had previously provided to Congress, but which had been heavily redacted, significantly impeding their review. This prompted the Committee to negotiate an agreement with the State Department that it would reproduce those documents in a less-redacted, more readable format. The less-redacted versions of the documents were finally produced by the State Department in November and December 2014.

From the outset, the Committee sought to develop an understanding of the perspective and insight from a specific group of people who had been most impacted by the attacks on the U.S. facilities in Benghazi: the families of the victims. To that end, some of the first meetings the Committee conducted were with the victims' families. The meetings offered the families an opportunity to be heard and to provide their insight to the Committee. Relatedly, the Committee met with the respective agencies to discuss survivorship benefits to ensure the families of the victims received benefits to which they were entitled. This issue remains unresolved with respect to one agency.

The Committee has also held over two dozen classified and unclassified briefings with the Administration and Executive Branch agencies that have information relevant to the investigation. For example, the Committee met with State Department officials to examine the events prior to and during the September 11-12, 2012 attacks, including examining video footage. The Committee has also met with Department of Justice and FBI officials on multiple occasions, including receiving a briefing on the capture of Ahmed Abu Khatalla and viewing additional footage documenting the attacks.

In addition to the preliminary briefings, the Committee sought to obtain full compliance with the still outstanding document requests. At the time the Committee was formed, the

State Department had yet to fully comply with two outstanding subpoenas issued in 2013. One subpoena dealt specifically with documents pertaining to the State Department's Accountability Review Board (ARB). The other subpoena dealt with documents that had previously undergone congressional review, but only *in camera*, thus limiting Congress' access to the information.

These subpoenas were still legally binding on the State Department, but had yet to be fulfilled. The Committee prioritized these subpoenas, and the information sought, over new requests. By continuing negotiations with the State Department regarding the existing subpoenas, the Committee was better positioned to receive new documents in a more expeditious manner while at the same time judiciously reviewing the work of past committees.

These negotiations resulted in the State Department producing 15,000 pages of new documents to the Committee. These productions were the first time: (1) the State Department produced any email to or from former Secretary Clinton; and (2) the Committee became aware the former Secretary had used a private e-mail account to conduct official State Department business.

The Committee's review of the 15,000 pages of new documents, together with the documents previously provided by other committees, created the basis from which the Committee has made additional document requests of Executive Branch agencies and has started interviewing key fact witnesses.

Included in these new requests was a November letter to the State Department requesting specific documents and communications related to Benghazi and Libya for eleven top State Department officials, including the former Secretary and her senior staff. In addition to these document requests, the Committee sent a letter to the former Secretary's attorney requesting all of the Secretary's emails related to Benghazi and Libya from her private email account. Finally, the Committee requested to speak with State Department witnesses, all of whom spent time on the ground in Benghazi, including agents who survived the attacks.

The Committee also requested information in late fall from the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Later, in December, the Committee sent requests for documents to the FBI and the White House – the first such document request made to the White House by Congress regarding the Benghazi attacks.

One of the Committee's specific directives is to examine the efforts the Executive Branch agencies have undertaken to protect U.S. facilities and personnel who are serving abroad. The Committee's most immediate and direct priority is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect against preventable future risks. Accordingly, the Committee devoted its first two hearings to the State Department's Benghazi ARB proceedings for Benghazi and to evaluate the State Department's progress implementing the recommendations to ensure the safety and security of Americans serving abroad.

By law, immediately following an event such as the one that took place in Benghazi Libya, the Secretary of State is required to convene an ARB to: (1) investigate the events; and (2) make written findings and recommendations. The Committee's first hearing, held on September 17, 2014, reviewed the State Department's effort to implement the ARB recommendations, as well as the recommendations issued by the Best Practices Panel (BPP). The BPP, a panel of outside, independent experts was convened at the recommendation of the ARB panel to evaluate the State Department's security platforms in high-risk, high-threat posts. The Committee's second hearing, held on December 10, 2014, continued the Committee's review of the State Department's progress in implementing the ARB recommendations. The hearing examined shortcomings identified by the State Department's Office of the Inspector General and the State Department's efforts to remedy the deficiencies.

The Committee held its third public hearing on January 27, 2015. However, unlike the previous two substantive hearings, this hearing served a different purpose. In the months following the Committee's initial document requests, Executive Branch agencies were slow to respond. Specifically, the State Department had yet to produce to the Committee a single document related to the ARB subpoena that had been issued in 2013. In addition, the State Department had yet to produce a single document related to the Committee's November 18, 2014 request to the State Department for documents and emails. Separately, the CIA had yet to provide the Committee with access to certain documents. In fact, since late fall, the Committee had requested access to documents that were stored at the CIA, previously provided to the congressional intelligence committees, and specifically set aside for the Committee's use. Yet, the CIA consistently refused the Committee access to these documents. In addition, the CIA was slow to address other Committee priorities such as providing security clearances.

The slow responses resulted in a public compliance hearing to highlight the negative impact that the agencies were having on the investigation. On January 27, 2015, both the State Department and CIA testified publicly about their agencies' cooperation with the Committee. The effect of the hearing was immediate. The CIA facilitated SCI clearances for five Committee staff, including the Committee's Chief Counsel. The CIA also granted immediate access to Committee staff for *in camera* review of the more than 4,000 pages of documents set aside for the Committee. The State Department, as a result of the hearing, pledged to provide the Committee with the former Secretary's emails in a timely manner. It also pledged to cooperate with the Committee by making witnesses available for interviews, which up to that point had not been done.

Challenges to Obtaining Executive Branch Compliance

While the third hearing was successful in part in facilitating agency action, a number of requests continued to remain outstanding. As noted earlier, the State Department for several months had yet to produce a single document to the Committee related to the 2013 ARB subpoena. The Committee emphasized the need for these documents by reissuing a new subpoena immediately following the January 27, 2015 hearing, for the 114th Congress.

The State Department's compliance posture, particularly as it relates to the ARB subpoena, has proved unpredictable at best. Notwithstanding the two-year lag time, the State Department's first production to the Committee pursuant to the ARB subpoena consisted of a four-page interview summary for a witness who was scheduled to appear early the following week. The Department maintained this production posture over the next several weeks, providing only one to two ARB interview summaries less than a week in advance of the Committee's interview with a particular witness.

It was not until April 15, 2015, nearly two years after Congress first issued a subpoena for the ARB documents, that the State Department produced more than 1,700 pages of documents related to the ARB. On April 23, 2015, the Department produced an additional 2,500 pages of documents related to the ARB. It is important to note that no other congressional committee has had access to these documents, and the production represents the first time that Congress has ever been provided internal ARB documents.

As discussed earlier, on November 18, 2014, the Committee sent a request for documents to the State Department, including seeking emails to and from Secretary Clinton and her senior staff. The request was the result of a review of the record provided by the previous House committees and the lack of email traffic among these individuals. Almost three months later, on February 13, 2015, the Department produced approximately 300 emails to and from the former Secretary during her time as the head of the State Department. However, the State Department has yet to produce a single document pursuant to the remaining portions of the November request. The Committee emphasized the importance of this request by issuing its second subpoena on March 4, 2015 – seeking the emails and documents relating to the ten senior State Department officials. These officials were the same ones referenced in the November 2014 document and communication request, except for the former Secretary.

Despite the document request and the subpoena, the State Department has yet to comply. The Committee has pressed the State Department regarding these requests over the course of several months, including providing guidance to the State Department such as prioritizing documents and timeframes to facilitate the Department's search and production.

In addition to the slow response, the Committee has also dealt with a number of additional impediments that have consistently slowed the production of documents and flow of information from the State Department to the Committee. The State Department continues to cite a lack of resources, including both personnel and technology, which prevent it from responding to the Committee in a timely manner. While the Committee respects the State Department's institutional interests, it is also important to note that a substantial degree of this effort may result from its own internal review processes rather than any requirements imposed by the Committee. The State Department has over classified certain documents and information, which prevents the Committee from discussing the content in unclassified settings and complicates interviews, even in the absence of clearly stated classification guidance. The State Department has redacted information within documents that purportedly pertains to interagency equities, yet other Executive Branch agencies have granted the Committee

unredacted access to similar information. The Committee provided the State Department with a single interview transcript totaling less than 100 pages earlier this spring and stressed the urgency of the declassification review in order to facilitate upcoming witness interviews. Nearly two months later, however, the Department has still not returned the transcript to the Committee with proper classification markings.

These types of impediments, though seemingly technical and mundane, have had a significant impact on the ability of the Committee – and by extension Congress – to fulfill its investigative responsibilities in a timely manner. The Committee is committed to working with the State Department to eliminate them. The State Department also pledged to expedite a classification review of interview transcripts in order to facilitate the effectiveness of future interviews.

Another substantial obstacle to the development of a full and complete record of the facts relating to Benghazi has been the unique arrangement that former Secretary of State Clinton had with herself. In August 2014, the State Department included in its production of documents eight emails to or from former Secretary Clinton. Some of these emails indicated that the Secretary used a private email account to communicate about official government business. Other emails gave no indication whether the email account used was private or a government account.

Since late fall, the Committee has consistently pressed the State Department for the former Secretary's emails. On February 13, 2015, the State Department produced nearly 850 pages of roughly 300 emails to and from the former Secretary pertaining to Benghazi. The production was significant in that every one of the emails produced came from Secretary Clinton's private email account.

However, it was not until late in February – just prior to the public revelation regarding the former Secretary's exclusive use of a private email account to conduct official business – that the State Department finally discussed the full range of issues related to the production of these emails with the Committee. During this discussion, for the first time, the State Department informed the Committee that the former Secretary did not have a government email address. During this discussion, for the first time, the State Department informed the Committee that it never had possession of the former Secretary's emails until her attorney turned them over to the State Department in December 2014. And, during this discussion, for the first time, the State Department informed the Committee that it had to manually search each of the former Secretary's emails because only paper copies of them existed, thus further delaying the State Department's response to the Committee. All of these issues were described to the Committee for the first time notwithstanding the fact that senior State Department officials had apparently been involved for months in efforts to retrieve the records from the former Secretary as a result of the Committee's inquiries.

The State Department has told the Committee that it cannot certify that it has turned over all documents responsive to the Committee's request regarding the former Secretary's

emails. Absent access to the server that housed the former Secretary's private emails, the Committee has no way to verify the assertions: (1) the former Secretary has produced the full universe of emails related to Benghazi and Libya; and (2) the server has been wiped clean and is currently void of any data that may reflect any email sent or received during her tenure as Secretary of State, including during the relevant time frame.

The fact that the Secretary exclusively used and maintained a private email server, leaving her with sole and unfettered access to the complete universe of her emails, raises a number of transparency and accountability issues. The fact that the Secretary's attorneys self-selected the emails to be shared with the State Department raises numerous questions about the completeness of the production of Secretary Clinton's emails to the Committee, as well as more generally in response to other oversight inquiries by the House with which the Committee has been charged. These questions, which have been raised solely due to the actions of the former Secretary, necessitate a third-party review of the server to ensure that all responsive documents have been produced to the Committee.

That is why in an April 23, 2015 letter to the former Secretary's attorney, the Committee reiterated its request for her to turn over the server to a neutral, third party, such as an inspector general. The Committee will call Secretary Clinton to testify once it is satisfied that all the relevant information has been provided by both the State Department and her.

The Select Committee's Next Steps

Despite these obstacles, the Committee continues to move forward in its investigation – interviewing survivors of the terrorist attacks and others who are giving indispensable firsthand accounts of what happened before, during and after the attacks. This undertaking has resulted in hundreds of hours of preparation, nearly 100 hours of actual interview time and 2,500 pages of testimony. In the coming months, an additional 60 witnesses representing current and former officials and employees from the State Department, the White House and the Intelligence Community will be interviewed.

A brief overview of the immediate next steps with regards to each affected Executive Branch agency is described below. As the Committee develops and reviews incoming information, it expects that it will have additional requests as the investigation progresses.

The Committee is nearing the end of its first round of interviews with State Department employees. Information obtained from this first round of interviews has raised additional questions of current and former State Department officials. Upon completion of these interviews, the Committee will begin a second round of interviews with additional State Department employees. This second round of interviews will consist of mid-level managers at the Department, many of whom were and are responsible for making day-to-day decisions and implementing the policy that is set by State Department leadership.

The Committee also intends to interview current and former senior State Department officials. These officials include Cheryl Mills, Jake Sullivan, Huma Abedin, Susan Rice and Patrick Kennedy, among others.

As discussed above, the Committee issued a subpoena to the State Department for emails to and from these senior officials on March 4, 2015, following an initial request of November 18, 2014. The Committee will continue its efforts to ensure these productions are made. The Committee is working with the Department on identifying priority documents and outlining a plan for the Department to begin a rolling production of documents so that the Committee will have access to these individuals' emails prior to their interviews.

In December 2014, the Select Committee sent a request to the White House for documents and communications pertaining to Benghazi. In February 2015, the White House and the Committee met to discuss this request and create a path forward. As a result of the meeting, the White House produced 266 pages of documents, many of which were emails to and from the National Security Staff.

In late April, the Committee sent the White House another letter reiterating and refining its original request. This second letter should help expedite the White House's ability to search and produce documents responsive to the Committee's request. The Committee is still engaged in discussions with the White House regarding access to responsive documents that may implicate certain Executive Branch privileges.

Additionally, the Committee intends to interview former White House and National Security Staff personnel regarding their roles in the events prior to, during and after the Benghazi attacks. These individuals include former National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, former Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough, former Deputy Strategic Communications Advisor Ben Rhodes, former National Security Council spokesperson Tommy Vietor, and former Director for Libya on the National Security Staff Ben Fishman. None of these individuals have previously testified before Congress regarding their role in and including knowledge of the events prior to, during or after the Benghazi attacks.

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) transferred a substantial number of documents to the Committee. These documents included transcripts of interviews with Intelligence Community personnel, including those present in Libya during the attacks, as well as hundreds of intelligence reports compiled by the Intelligence Community as part of its Benghazi Intelligence Review. The Committee conducted a thorough review of this information to evaluate the information developed in previous investigations, as well as potential additional evidence to be requested and reviewed.

The Committee also reviewed more than 4,000 pages of emails, reports and other documents previously made available to the House and Senate Intelligence committees on a read-and-return basis. These documents were generated in response to previous document requests by previous committees. Per its agreement with CIA, HPSCI returned these documents

to the CIA upon the conclusion of its investigation. When returning them, the Chairman of HPSCI requested that CIA preserve the documents in such a way as to have them readily available for review by the Select Committee.

Those documents were made available to the Committee subsequent to the January 27, 2015 compliance hearing. Since then, the Committee has reviewed the documents to better understand the information contained and to identify gaps in the material previously provided to the Committee. The Committee has sent additional information requests to the intelligence community and is in the process of interviewing these officials in order to more fully understand the relevant issues.

Over the last year, the FBI has provided nearly 50 intelligence reports related to its investigation into the Benghazi attacks to the Committee. Eighteen of these reports are specific to the interrogation and prosecution of Abu Khatalla and have never before been shared with Congress. The FBI has also provided a detailed classified briefing to the Committee of its investigation into the attacks.

Last month, the Committee requested information from the Department of Justice for documents and communications pertaining to the prosecution of the individual who created the Internet video that sparked the protests in Cairo, Egypt on September 11-12, 2012. The FBI has produced over 200 pages of material related to that request.

The Committee has other outstanding requests with the FBI and will continue to hold meetings and briefings with the Department of Justice and FBI to obtain information related to the events that occurred prior to, during and after September 11-12, 2012. The Committee will issue additional information requests or additional requests for witnesses as needed.

The Committee has sent multiple letters to the Department of Defense requesting documents and information related to the Department's response to the Benghazi attacks. The Committee has requested five separate briefings from the Department, which will be provided over the next few weeks. The Committee has also requested several discrete categories of documents that were not provided to the House Armed Services Committee. Separately, the Committee has made additional requests for documents to the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

Beginning in June, the Committee intends to interview current and former Department of Defense employees about their role in the response to the Benghazi attacks. These individuals include Secretary Leon Panetta, General Martin Dempsey and General Carter Ham, among others.

Conclusion

Over the past year, the Committee has proceeded in a deliberate and measured manner – assessing available information, asking targeted questions and seeking specific responses from the agencies and the White House. The tens-of-thousands of pages of new documents produced as a result of the requests for documents and subpoenas, and the information gleaned from the interviews, have all been integrated into the Committee’s investigation and further informed its next steps.

The Committee has encountered obstacles that have had a significant effect on the pace of the investigation. Despite these obstacles, the Committee will continue its work in a deliberate manner to obtain a definitive answer to the questions that have been outstanding for almost three years regarding the events that occurred before, during and after the terrorist attacks. Only then will the Committee be able to issue its investigative report.

The Committee takes its mandate seriously. The Benghazi attacks left a permanent mark on U.S. diplomacy abroad. Despite previous investigations, many questions remain unanswered. The Committee owes a duty to the four Americans who lost their lives to ensure a thorough investigation is conducted so that Benghazi never happens again.