

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2012 1:49 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Isakson/Corker Letter
Attachments: 9-26-12 McKeon et al to POTUS.PDF

----- Original Message -----

From: Blumenfeld, Joshua R
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2012 01:33 PM
To: Reines, Philippe I; Adams, David S; Kennedy, Patrick F
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: RE: Isakson/Corker Letter

Hi Philippe,

Attached is the McKeon letter.

Thanks,
Josh

-----Original Message-----

From: Blumenfeld, Joshua R
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2012 1:25 PM
To: Reines, Philippe I; Adams, David S; Kennedy, Patrick F
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: RE: Isakson/Corker Letter

Yes, attached are 1) the Corker-Isakson letter; the 2) McCain-Graham-Ayotte letter. We don't yet have the 10 Republican House Members letters, but are tracking it down now.

-----Original Message-----

From: Reines, Philippe I
Sent: Thursday, September 27, 2012 1:18 PM
To: Adams, David S; Blumenfeld, Joshua R; Kennedy, Patrick F
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Isakson/Corker Letter

H Friends -

Do we have the full letter reference in this article?

GOP Lawmakers Demand Details Of Deadly Attack On U.S. Consulate In Libya By Ernesto Londoño The Washington Post
Thursday, September 27, 2012

Republican lawmakers demanded Wednesday that the Obama administration disclose details about the Sept. 11 attack on U.S. compounds in eastern Libya that killed an ambassador and three other government employees.

The requests for information about the assault, including any cables about security written by slain Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, underscored the extent to which the incident has become a political liability for the White House during the final stretch of President Obama's reelection campaign.

Lawmakers are asking whether the administration overlooked warning signs about the threat level in Libya, and some have suggested the security at the U.S. installations in Benghazi was inadequate.

Senior administration officials, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, have briefed Congress. But details on the events in Benghazi are still being assembled.

After initially describing the attack as a spontaneous act of mob violence in response to a video that disparaged Islam, administration officials in recent days have begun to suggest it was a well-planned terrorist attack.

Clinton mentioned the Benghazi assault Wednesday during a speech at the U.N. General Assembly about the rise of extremist militants in North Africa. Clinton did not specifically ascribe the attack to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the African offshoot of the terrorist organization, but she said the violent deaths of American officials underscored the importance of defeating the group.

"With a larger safe haven and increased freedom to maneuver, terrorists are seeking to extend their reach and their networks in multiple directions," Clinton said, according to an official transcript of her remarks. "And they are now working with other violent extremists to undermine the democratic transitions underway in North Africa, as we tragically saw in Benghazi."

U.S. counterterrorism chief Matthew Olsen told the the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee last week that analysts are exploring whether al-Qaeda's African branch played a role in the attack. Investigators are also looking for evidence linking the assault to leaders of Ansar al-Sharia, a loose coalition of hard-line militants with a strong presence in Libya.

Republican congressmen took the administration to task for what they called contradictory statements about the Benghazi raid and initial information portraying it as a protest that turned violent.

"This seems like a pre-9/11 mindset — treating an act of war solely as a criminal matter," a group of 10 congressmen wrote Wednesday in a letter to the president, referring to the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Sens. Johnny Isakson (Ga.) and Bob Corker (Tenn.), GOP members of the Foreign Relations Committee, sent a letter Tuesday to Clinton expressing concern about the "lack of security preparations made despite a demonstrable increase in risks to U.S. officials and facilities in Benghazi." The senators asked to see any relevant cables that Stevens wrote in the days before he was killed.

The State Department has launched a type of probe called an accountability panel. The FBI is conducting a separate criminal investigation into the incident. Citing the inquiries, administration officials have provided few new details about the Benghazi raid in recent days. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice made the most extensive remarks about the attack four days after the deaths. Her early accounts have come under scrutiny because they suggested that U.S. government officials did not believe the assault had been well planned or coordinated.

"We look forward to a timely response that explains how the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations could characterize an attack on a U.S. consulate so inaccurately," Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) and three fellow Republican senators wrote Wednesday in a letter to Rice.

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

September 25, 2012

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express grave concern about the events surrounding the terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012, that led to the murder of the United States Ambassador to Libya, Christopher Stevens, and three other U.S. Government personnel. We profoundly regret the loss of lives and seek to ensure all necessary steps are being taken to bring the perpetrators to justice and prevent similar future attacks. While we appreciate your willingness to provide the House of Representatives with an interagency briefing last week, many of the members' questions were left unanswered. To that end, we are seeking additional information regarding the intelligence leading up to the attack, the security posture of our embassy, the role former Guantanamo Bay detainees may have played, as well as the way forward in Libya and, indeed, the region.

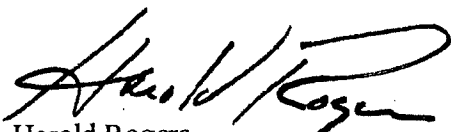
We are also disturbed by the public statements made by members of the Administration that would lead the American public to believe this attack was a protest gone wrong, rather than what it truly was – a terrorist attack on the United States on the anniversary of 9/11. Decades after al Qaeda attacked our embassies in East Africa, which catalyzed a series of events that led to the attacks on 9/11, it appears they executed a highly coordinated and well-planned attack against us again. Clearly, the threat from al Qaeda and affiliated groups has metastasized; yet we do not appear to be learning from the past. For example, although brave Americans were once more murdered by terrorists, it seems our response is to rely on a late-to-the-scene FBI investigation. Media reports indicate investigators were prevented from arriving in Libya until more than a week after the attack, but it is not clear that they have gone to Benghazi and have, therefore, been unable to secure valuable information, such as the Ambassador's journal. The FBI has expertise in these situations, and they have a role to play. However, this seems like a pre-9/11 mindset – treating an act of war solely as a criminal matter, rather than also prioritizing the gathering of intelligence to prevent future attacks. Moreover, given that violence in the region continues unabated, what actions are we undertaking to deter terrorists from capitalizing

The President
September 25, 2012
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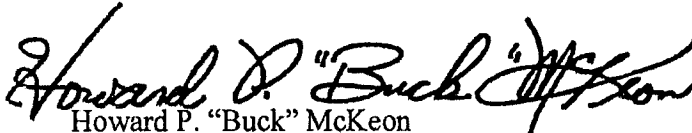
on the successful Benghazi attack, or launching similar attacks elsewhere in the region or in the homeland?

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We place significant weight on our constitutional responsibility to conduct appropriate oversight even when Congress is not in session and stand ready to return to Washington. Therefore, we respectfully request a joint briefing to respond to the questions enclosed, as classified Attachment A, at the earliest opportunity and would appreciate your commitment to continue to keep Congress informed even as the FBI investigation proceeds.

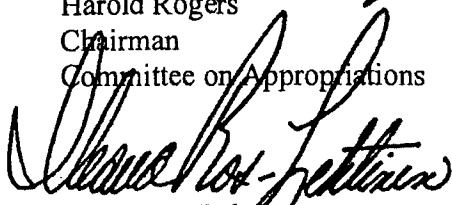
Respectfully,



Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations



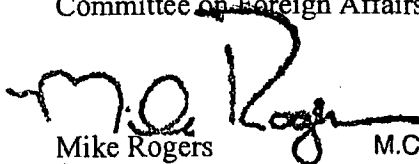
Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services



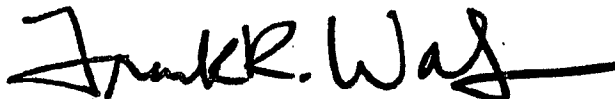
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs



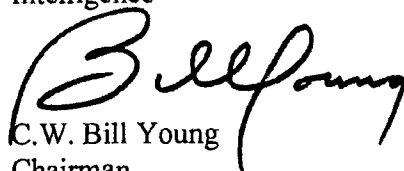
Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary



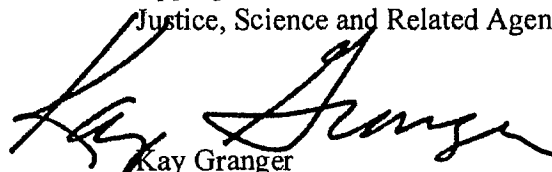
Mike Rogers M.C.
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence



Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce
Justice, Science and Related Agencies



C.W. Bill Young
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Defense



Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs