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Committee On Oversight & Government Reform

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Denied: US Diplomats in Libya Requested More Security

October 2, 2012

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Issa and Chaffetz ask Secretary Hillary Clinton for Answers on Deadly Benghazi Attack

WASHINGTON- House Oversight and Government Reform Committee leaders today [sent a letter](#) to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton asking why requests for more protection were denied to the U.S. mission in Libya by Washington officials prior to the September 11, 2012 terrorist attack that killed U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens. The denials came after repeated attacks and security threats to U.S. personnel.

"Based on information provided to the Committee by individuals with direct knowledge of events in Libya, the attack that claimed the ambassador's life was the latest in a long line of attacks on Western diplomats and officials in Libya in the months leading up to September 11, 2012. It was clearly never, As Administration officials once insisted, the result of a popular protest," the committee's chairman, Rep. Darrell Issa, R-Calif., and subcommittee chairman, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, write. "In addition, multiple U.S. federal government officials have confirmed to the Committee that, prior to the September 11 attack, the U.S. mission in Libya made repeated requests for increased security in Benghazi. The mission in Libya, however, was denied these resources by officials in Washington."

The letter outlines 13 security threats over the six months prior to the attack.

"Put together, these events indicated a clear pattern of security threats that could only be reasonably interpreted to justify increased security for U.S. personnel and facilities in Benghazi," the chairmen write.

The Committee indicated it intends to convene a hearing in Washington on Wednesday October 10, 2012, on the security failures that preceded the attack.

Click [here](#) for Chairman Issa and Rep. Chaffetz's letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Click [here](#) for photos obtained by the Oversight Committee of the badly damaged vehicle from the June attempt to assassinate the British Ambassador.

Text of the letter is below:

October 2, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton

Secretary

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, NW

Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has been conducting an investigation of the events surrounding the assassination of J. Christopher Stevens, the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, on September 11, 2012. The Full Committee anticipates convening a hearing on Wednesday, October 10, 2012, to consider the security situation in Benghazi leading up to the September 11 attack. This will include

State Department security assessments and security related decision making.

Based on information provided to the Committee by individuals with direct knowledge of events in Libya, the attack that claimed the Ambassador's life was the latest in a long line of attacks on Western diplomats and officials in Libya in the months leading up to September 11, 2012. It was clearly never, as Administration officials once insisted, the result of a popular protest. In addition, multiple U.S. federal government officials have confirmed to the Committee that, prior to the September 11 attack, the U.S. mission in Libya made repeated requests for increased security in Benghazi. The mission in Libya, however, was denied these resources by officials in Washington.

Below is a list of attacks and events compiled by the Committee from the six months prior to the murder of Ambassador Stevens that we understand were a basis for repeated resource requests:

- April 6, 2012, BENGHAZI – Two Libyans who had been fired from a contractor providing unarmed static security for Consulate Benghazi, threw a small IED over the Consulate fence. There were no casualties or damage and the suspects were arrested but not prosecuted.
- April 11, 2012, BENGHAZI – A gun battle between an unidentified armed group and forces loyal to the Transitional National Council (TNC) occurred about 4km from Consulate Benghazi. The unidentified armed group attacked a Ministry of the Interior building in an attempt to seize a fleet of vehicles that had belonged to the Gaddafi regime. The gun battle included use of anti-aircraft guns and RPGs.
- April 25, 2012, TRIPOLI – A US Embassy Local Guard Force officer traveling in a diplomatically-plated vehicle was detained and his Embassy-issued radio seized at a militia checkpoint. He was released without further incident.
- April 26, 2012, BENGHAZI – While a Foreign Service officer stationed at Consulate Benghazi was attending a trade-related event at the International Medical University, a fistfight escalated to gunfire between security forces for the trade delegation and militia providing security for the University. A US Foreign Service officer was evacuated by members of the 17th of February Martyrs Brigade, a Libyan militia, stationed at Consulate Benghazi.
- April 27, 2012, BENGHAZI – Two South African contractors were kidnapped by armed men while walking through a residential area of Benghazi. After a brief interrogation about their nationality and purpose in Libya, they were released unharmed.
- May 1, 2012, TRIPOLI – The Deputy Commander of Embassy Tripoli's Local Guard Force was carjacked, beaten and detained by a group of armed youth. He escaped by climbing over a fence and notifying the Embassy by phone. Libyan security forces fought a gun battle with the assailants in order to recover a number of stolen vehicles and release other detainees.
- May 22, 2012, BENGHAZI – Two RPG rounds were fired at the Benghazi office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), approximately 1 km from Consulate Benghazi. The attack occurred during the early morning hours and there were no casualties. A Facebook posting that claimed responsibility for the attack said: "After we confirmed that the ICRC were giving out the Bible to the refugees of Tuwerga in Benghazi, a group of Mujaheddin attacked the HQ of the ICRC with an RPG and it targeted the meeting room inside the building. We didn't want to hurt the Christians it is just a warning, we also didn't want to hurt any Muslims working there. We recorded it on video and will publish it soon – so the ICRC must take down their flag with the red cross and close its offices in Libya. We announce that Libya is an Islamic State. We did not attack the Sahara Bank. Finally, now we are preparing a message for the Americans for disturbing the skies over Derna."
- June 2012 – Ambassador Stevens was in the habit of taking early morning runs around Tripoli along with members of his security detail. According to sources, sometime in June 2012, a posting on a pro-Gaddafi Facebook page trumpeted these runs and directed a threat against Ambassador Stevens along with a stock photo of him. It is reported that, after stopping these morning runs for about a week, the Ambassador resumed them.
- June 6, 2012, BENGHAZI – Under cover of darkness, assailants placed an IED on the north gate of Consulate Benghazi, blowing a hole in the security perimeter that was described by one individual as, "big enough for forty men to go through."
- June 10, 2012, BENGHAZI – On or about June 10, 2012, a two-car convoy carrying the British Ambassador to Libya from a conference on reforming Libyan military law was attacked in broad daylight by a militant with an RPG. This attack was an important escalation in the violence against Western targets in Benghazi, as prior attacks had been at night and were often preceded by warnings from the attackers. Photos from the aftermath of the attack are attached.
- Late June 2012, BENGHAZI – The ICRC building was attacked again, this time in broad daylight while people were inside. Once the ICRC pulled out, the US Consulate was the last Western flag flying in Benghazi, making it an ideal target for militants.
- August 6, 2012, TRIPOLI – Armed assailants attempted to carjack a vehicle bearing diplomatic plates operated by U.S. security personnel.
- WEEKS BEFORE September 11, 2012, BENGHAZI – The unarmed Libyan guards employed by British contractor Blue Mountain Group were being warned by their family members to quit their jobs guarding Consulate Benghazi because there were rumors in the community of an impending attack.

Put together, these events indicated a clear pattern of security threats that could only be reasonably interpreted to justify increased security for U.S. personnel and facilities in Benghazi.

To help the Committee in its assessment of the security situation in Benghazi before Ambassador Stevens' murder please prepare a written response to the following no later than October 8, 2012, and make the appropriate officials from the Department available for a briefing for Members of the Committee by the same date:

1. Was State Department headquarters in Washington aware of all of the above incidents? If not, why not?
2. If so, what measures did the State Department take to match the level of security provided to the U.S. Mission in Libya to the level of threat?
3. Please detail any requests made by Embassy Tripoli to State Department headquarters for additional security, whether in general or in light of

specific attacks mentioned above. How did the Department respond to each of those requests?

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and may at "any time" investigate "any matter" as set forth in House Rule X.

When producing documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.

If you have any questions about these requests, please contact Tom Alexander or Brien Beattie of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Darrell Issa

Chairman
Operations

Jason Chaffetz

Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense, and Foreign

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