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As the White House denies Benghazi survivors sought clearance to testify about what they saw, House Republicans schedule a hearing to listen to their stories

- White House Press Secretary insisted that no government employees were being blocked from testifying about the 2012 Benghazi consulate attack
- Four survivors have retained lawyers to help prepare their testimony, with at least one attorney saying her client's superiors threatened him
- The House Oversight committee will hear their testimony on May 8, forcing the Obama administration's hand
- President Obama has professed ignorance of any effort to prevent whistle-blowers from telling Congress about the night terrorists attacked

By [David Martosko](#)

PUBLISHED: 20:20 EST, 1 May 2013 | **UPDATED:** 01:55 EST, 2 May 2013

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney denied on Wednesday that the Obama administration was prohibiting any U.S. personnel who survived last year's attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya from testifying before Congress about what they experienced. But a lawyer representing one of those potential whistle-blowers is insisting that the White House is stonewalling congressional requests for their testimony.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee announced earlier in the day that it will convene a hearing on May 8 aimed at 'exposing failure' in the Obama administration to respond o security threats to that diplomatic mission, and to present to the public and to Congress an accurate version of the attack that left U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans dead.

'This Administration has offered the American people only a carefully selected and sanitized version of events from before, during, and after the Benghazi terrorist attacks, committee chairman Darrell Issa, a Republican congressman from California, said in a statement Wednesday. 'Not surprisingly, this version of events casts senior officials in the most favorable light possible.'

SCROLL DOWN FOR VIDEO





Jay Carney insisted in a press briefing that no administration employees had sought security clearances so they could testify about the Benghazi raid, even after the House Oversight Committee asked for those very clearances

Issa's committee has already shed public light on the U.S. State Department's denials of requests for more robust security at the consulate in Benghazi. And in an October 2012 hearing, it produced evidence contradicting the administration's initial claim that the Sept. 11, 2012 military-style assault on the diplomatic compound began as a 'protest' sparked by a low-budget YouTube video that lampooned the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

'Next week's hearing will expose new facts and details that the Obama Administration has tried to suppress,' Issa said.

At least four surviving witnesses to the Benghazi attack have retained attorneys to help them navigate the process of testifying before Congress about what they saw. They are all employees of the CIA and the State Department, according to a Fox News report.



The U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya was attacked and burned on Sept. 11, 2012 in a military-style attack that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans





California Republican Rep> Darrell Issa (L) has announced a hearing in which the House Oversight committee, which he chairs, will hear testimony from survivors who say they have been blocked from telling Congress what they know. South Carolina Rep. Trey Gowdy (R) has promised that the Benghazi attack is 'not going away despite the efforts of this [Obama] administration'

Attorney Victoria Toensing said Tuesday that she is representing one of them, a man who has been cowed into silence under threats of damage to his career.

President Obama denied on Tuesday that he was aware of any U.S. personnel who were being prevented from sharing their observations with congressional investigators.

'I'm not familiar with this notion that anybody has been blocked from testifying,' the president said in response to a reporter's question, 'so what I'll do is I will find out what exactly you're referring to.'

Both the CIA and the State Department have told Congress that no employees have requested the security clearances that their lawyers would need before talking to Congress.

And on Wednesday, Obama's chief spokesman Jay Carney insisted during a White House press briefing that 'Benghazi happened a long time ago,' and that 'we are unaware of any agency blocking an employee who

And on Wednesday, Obama's chief spokesman Jay Carney insisted during a White House press briefing that 'Benghazi happened a long time ago,' and that 'we are unaware of any agency blocking an employee who would like to appear before Congress to provide information related to Benghazi.'



Attorney Victoria Toensing represents a survivor of the Benghazi attack whom she says the Obama administration has blocked from testifying by refusing to give her the necessary security clearance to learn what her own client knows

But Toensing, a former Justice Department official and Republican counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, told Fox News that administration officials are issuing 'some very despicable threats to people ... They're taking career people and making them well aware that their careers will be over' if they testify.

The State Department, she said during a separate Fox News interview, has 'had two letters from Chairman Issa, one on April 16, the other one April 26, that specifically say, "We want you to provide a process for

...they're taking career people and making them renounce that their careers might be over if they testify.

The State Department, she said during a separate Fox News interview, has 'had two letters from Chairman Issa, one on April 16, the other one April 26, that specifically say, "We want you to provide a process for clearing a lawyer to receive classified information."

'How can they possibly get up there and just lie to the press corps?' she asked, referring to the

[WMAL in Washington...](#)



president and his spokespersons.

Toensing, according to her law partner who was interviewed Wednesday on ABC radio affiliate WMAL in Washington, already possesses a Top Secret clearance, and would only need a letter from an administration attorney in order to learn what her client already knows.

That law partner, former U.S. Attorney Joe DiGenova, explained on Monday that 'the Department of State is refusing to grant clearances to Victoria and other people who want to represent the whistle-blowers, in an attempt to prevent the testimony.'



The FBI released these photos on Wednesday of individuals who were seen near the Benghazi consulate on the day Libyan terrorists attack it, killing four Americans including the U.S. ambassador. The raid on that diplomatic outpost happened eight months ago

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT *for the*
Members of the House Republican Conference
on the Events Surrounding the September 11, 2012
Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi, Libya



House Republicans issued a scathing report on April 23 criticizing the Obama administration for a series of intelligence failures and an attempted cover-up after the Benghazi raid. When then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testified before Congress, she disputed that it was important to determine whether the raid was carried out by terrorist militants or by an angry group of protesters, as the administration first claimed

'On April 26, Congressman Issa sent a letter to the new Sec of State, John Kerry, demanding that the lawyers who are going to represent the whistle-blowers be cleared - be given clearances - so they can talk to their clients and the committee about classified information,' DiGenova said.

'She got a new Top Secret security clearance within the last year. And now they will not clear her or any of the other lawyers to represent the Department of State people. This is so outrageous.'

'There is going to be a Constitutional showdown here,' he predicted,' and 'Congress is going to win. The administration's effort to cover up whatever happened in Benghazi is going to fail.'

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'The whistle-blowers are out there,' DiGenova insisted. 'These are great Americans. These are heroes. They were on the ground in Benghazi. They want to tell their story and the administration is going to do everything it can to stop them from testifying under oath in public. And they want to protect Hillary [Clinton] and the president. That's what this is all about.'

South Carolina Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy, who serves on the House oversight committee, said Wednesday that he was 'not at liberty to disclose the identity of the witnesses' who will appear at next week's hearing.

'Benghazi is warming up,' Gowdy promised during a televised interview. 'It is not going away despite the efforts of this administration.'



Joe DiGenova, shown here in a file photo, said Benghazi survivors 'want to tell their story and the [Obama] administration is going to do everything it can to stop them.'