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Congress of the United States
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September 11, 2013

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary, U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

It is now the first anniversary of the terrorist attack on our diplomatic facilities in Benghazi, Libya. As you know, our assets there were destroyed and four Americans—including a United States Ambassador—were brutally killed.

I am writing to ask your assistance in expediting the collection and reporting of information concerning what happened that night and the ensuing response from the administration. I am a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is investigating what happened during the attack and what transpired afterwards so that the families of the victims—in addition to the American public at-large—may find closure. I do not intend to duplicate the Oversight Committee's efforts, but I share Chairman Issa's frustration with the prolonged delays shown by the State Department in response to Chairman Issa's May 15, 2013 letter seeking documents and the May 28, 2013 subpoena issued by the committee.

I am concerned that administration officials are circumventing the Freedom of Information Act by utilizing private emails for official business. The actions of former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson have raised the prospect that other administration officials are using secret emails to obscure what is being done, and by whom. Further, we still do not have information about the decision to fabricate a cover story about a video leading to the Benghazi attack and the decision to blame Americans for the attack instead of factually disclosing that it was the result of a premeditated terrorist attack.

I also remain troubled by the lack of transparency from the administration with regard to disclosing who made the decision to order our military rescue teams to stand down, thereby abandoning our men in the field.

I am now asking the following information be provided:

- (1) Are any State Department employees using private email accounts to conduct official business?
- (2) Has any review or audit been conducted internally to determine if employees are using personal or non-governmental emails to conduct official business?
- (3) Who gave final approval for Ambassador Susan Rice to tell the public and the media that the attack in Benghazi was a spontaneous attack stemming from protests about a video?
- (4) Why did the State Department want to mislead the public as to the cause of the attack on Benghazi? What was to gain by blaming the attack on a video as opposed to disclosing the truth—that the attack was a terrorist plot?
- (5) Typically we never leave our men on the field of battle. It is the one truism upon which our men and women in uniform used to be able to rely. Who approved the order not to send a military rescue for the diplomatic staff? What was the reasoning? Is this decision a change in longstanding policy or a one-time aberration?

I look forward to your response addressing these issues. It is my belief we can learn from our mistakes, and clearly, many mistakes were made before and after the Benghazi attack. American blood has paid for those mistakes, and we owe it to them to get to the bottom of this and create a better path forward.

Sincerely,

Paul Gosar (AZ-04)

Cc: Chairman Darrell Issa
Ranking Member Elijah Cummings