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THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE AND PRESIDENTIAL PROTECTION: AN EXAMINATION OF A SYSTEM FAILURE

PART I and II

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE AND PRESIDENTIAL PROTECTION: AN EXAMINATION OF A SYSTEM FAILURE

PART I

Thursday, December 3, 2009

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Sanchez, Harman, Norton, Jackson Lee, Cuellar, Carney, Clarke, Richardson, Kirkpatrick, Luján, Pascrell, Cleaver, Green, Himes, Kilroy, Massa, Titus, King, Souder, Lungren, Rogers, McCaul, Dent, Bilirakis, Broun, Miller, Olson, and Austria.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Committee on Homeland Security will come to order.

The committee is meeting today to receive testimony on, "The United States Secret Service and Presidential Protection: An Examination of a System's Failure."

Good morning. I want to thank the witnesses for agreeing to testify here today.

Some people have asked me why we are having this hearing. Let me be clear, this hearing is not about crashing a party at the White House. Neither is it about wanna-be celebrities or reality television.

On the contrary, this hearing is about real-world threats to the Nation. We cannot forget that amidst all of the hullabaloo and uproar, the most important and indisputable fact is that a couple gained unauthorized access to the White House grounds because no one from the Secret Service prevented them from entering. They remained at the White House because no one from the Secret Service required them to leave.

We are not concerned about agency embarrassment. Discomfort or shame cannot serve as a substitute for performance. The security gaps at issue cannot be explained away as missteps by a few frontline employees. There were undeniable planning and execution failures of the entire Secret Service apparatus. With security failings that seem to hang over that evening like a fog, we are all fortunate that this diplomatic celebration did not become a night of horror.

There is no doubt that this incident can be an enlightening case study, but it is not enough for us to merely analyze. We must dis-

sect every fact. We must learn the lesson and fix the problem, and after we do these things, we need to give thanks that no lives were lost.

Today we take a hard look at Secret Service actions and omissions that have been revealed and confirmed by this incident. This Nation's response to the terrorism threat at home and abroad demands that we maintain vigilance. The fact that unauthorized persons gained access to the White House complex during an official State Dinner, mixed and mingled and were photographed with the President, Vice President, and the Prime Minister of India is about as far from vigilant as one can get. It is simply unacceptable. The American people deserve a full accounting and full accountability. We must be assured that this will never happen again.

I look forward to the testimony presented today, and I look forward to the actions that should follow.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

Some people have asked me why we are having this hearing. Let me be clear. This hearing is not about crashing a party at the White House. Neither is it about "wanna-be" celebrities or reality television.

On the contrary, this hearing is about real world threats to the Nation.

We cannot forget that amidst all the hullabaloo and uproar, the most important and indisputable fact is that a couple gained unauthorized access to the White House grounds because no one from the Secret Service prevented them from entering.

They remained at the White House because no one from the Secret Service required them to leave.

We are not concerned about agency embarrassment. Discomfort or shame cannot serve as a substitute for performance. The security gaps at issue cannot be explained away as small missteps by a few front-line employees.

There were undeniable planning and execution failures of the entire Secret Service apparatus.

With security failings that seemed to hang over that evening like a fog, we are all fortunate that this diplomatic celebration did not become a night of horror.

There is no doubt that this incident can be an enlightening case study. But it is not enough for us to merely analyze. We must dissect every facet. We must learn the lessons and fix the problems. And after we do these things, we need to give thanks that no lives were lost.

Today, we take a hard look at Secret Service actions and omissions that have been revealed and confirmed by this incident. This Nation's response to the terrorism threat at home and abroad, demands that we maintain vigilance.

The fact that unauthorized persons gained access to the White House Complex during an official State Dinner, mixed and mingled, and were photographed with the President, Vice President and the Prime Minister of India is about as far from vigilant as one can get. It is simply unacceptable.

The American people deserve a full accounting and full accountability. And we all must be assured that this will never happen again.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the full committee, the gentleman from New York, Mr. King for an opening statement.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me at the outset thank you and your staff for the level of cooperation you have shown throughout this matter as far as scheduling the hearing, as far as keeping us apprised on what has been happening, and also as far as agreeing with my request that Desiree Rogers be called as a witness before this committee.

I agree with you completely, Mr. Chairman, that we cannot have discomfort or shame be a reason for someone not to testify or own up to responsibility.

It is also important, as you said, that we dissect every fact.

Let me just say, the Secret Service, I believe, does an outstanding job. Obviously, mistakes were made here. I commend Director Sullivan for immediately acknowledging that and for also conducting an internal investigation and for the level of cooperation he has given to me and I realize to you as well over the last several days of putting everything on the table and holding nothing back. So I commend him for that, and whatever decisions he is to make within the Secret Service, I am sure that he will do the right thing.

Mr. Chairman, the reality is that at social events at the White House, security is a shared responsibility between the Secret Service and the Office of the Social Secretary. We have gone back through two administrations, and we cannot find any instance of any significant event to the White House where the Social Secretary's Office was not there standing with the Secret Service. There are reasons for this.

One is, in the event that someone is supposed to be on the list and is not, the Social Secretary's Office can resolve that; they can work to resolve it while the Secret Service continues to process other people in line.

In this instance, for whatever reason, the decision was made not to have one person from the Social Secretary's Office standing with the Secret Service that night, not one. So this reverses policies of at least two administrations.

Now, the reason I asked for Desiree Rogers to come here was not in any way to make this a vendetta, not to go after her at all; for the same reason that we asked Director Sullivan to testify here, because if we want to get a complete picture, we have to learn from the Secret Service what they do, what they didn't do, what the Social Secretary's Office did and what they didn't do and why they were not there that night. This to me is a real issue.

During the week we had initially the White House saying Secret Service was entirely to blame. It has come all the way around about to last night with Mr. Messina, the assistant chief of staff for the White House, saying that the White House was now going to begin a policy of having someone from the Social Secretary's Office there with the Secret Service.

What he is not saying is that this is the policy that was in effect for at least two previous administrations. To me, the issue is, who made the decision, why was the decision made not to have anyone from the Social Secretary's Office there that night.

I will say, and I have no doubt of this at all, if someone from the Social Secretary's Office had been there doing what has been done for at least the previous 16 or 17 years, that couple would not have been allowed into the White House. They would have been stopped because they were not on the initial list. The Secret Service officer would have then handed them off to the Social Secretary's Office, and they would have resolved it.

I know in previous administrations, they had a whole team of social secretaries and people there. They had people from the Diplomatic Office, people from Legislative Affairs, people from the President's own staff to avoid embarrassing incidents and also to make sure that no one got in who was not supposed to be in.

So for Desiree Rogers not to be here for the White House and Mr. Gibbs to sort of offhandedly say at a White House briefing yesterday—Mr. Chairman, maybe you received an official notice from the White House. We certainly didn't.

We listened to what Mr. Gibbs said when he said that White House staffers don't testify before Congress. That is untrue. I was on the Banking Committee in 1994 during the Whitewater hearings when President Clinton sent up George Stephanopoulos, Harold Ickes, Maggie Williams, who was Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, sent up Lloyd Cutler, the President's counsel, and also sent up a previous counsel, sent up Mark Gearan, the press secretary, all to testify before Congress.

Yet on this issue, where we are talking about the security of the President of the United States, the person who made that decision is not going to be here. I think it is wrong. I think it is stonewalling. I think it is an affront to our committee.

This was a bipartisan request, Mr. Chairman, a bipartisan request to the White House which prides itself on being open, which prides itself on cooperation. But in this instance, they are stonewalling. For our committee to work with the White House, there has to be an element of trust. They have breached that trust.

I am going to do all that I can, Mr. Chairman. I have worked with you to issue subpoenas for the Salahis, to have them here, but I also believe we should subpoena Desiree Rogers. This is not a separation of powers issue. This is not an issue where there are people in the White House advising the President on health care or cap and trade or Afghanistan.

We are talking about an administrative decision to have people or not have people standing with the Secret Service and to change the policy of at least 20 years standing.

To me, Mr. Chairman, this is an incomplete hearing. It is half a hearing. We are getting half the picture from the Secret Service, which has acknowledged its responsibility, and we are being stonewalled by the White House, which refuses to.

I yield back. Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Just for the record, the Salahis were not on the list. They were not stopped. So a Social Secretary wouldn't have had a responsibility in this situation. They are party planners. They are not security personnel.

I think one of the reasons we brought Director Sullivan here is to explain the role of the Secret Service from a security standpoint. He can answer a number of these questions as we go forward.

Other Members of the committee are reminded that, under the committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record. Our sole witness is Mr. Mark Sullivan.

Mr. Sullivan was sworn in as the 22nd director of the United States Secret Service on May 31, 2006. Mr. Sullivan has been a recipient of numerous awards for superior performance throughout his 26-year tenure with the Secret Service, including a Distinguished Presidential Rank Award in 2005.

Welcome, Mr. Sullivan. I thank you for being here today.

Without objection, the witness's full statement will be inserted in the record.

I will now ask Director Sullivan to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MARK J. SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Chairman.

Good morning, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King and other distinguished Members of the committee.

The U.S. Secret Service is an organization that maintains deep pride in the work it does on behalf of our Nation. Based on the high standards to which the men and women hold themselves and the standards the Nation expects, I regret that on Tuesday, November 24, established protocols and procedures were not followed, allowing two individuals entry into the White House.

The moment this was brought to my attention on Wednesday, November 25, I immediately directed our Office of Professional Responsibility to begin an investigation and a review into the events surrounding the previous evening. Further, I directed the Office of Professional Responsibility to contact the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General in order to advise them of our investigation.

While the investigation remains on-going, preliminary findings have determined that established procedures relating to entering the White House were not followed at the initial checkpoint. An error in judgment, a mistake was made. In our line of work, we cannot afford even one mistake. In this particular circumstance, two individuals, who should have been prohibited from passing through a checkpoint and entering the grounds were allowed to proceed to the magnetometers and other levels of screening before they were then allowed to enter the White House. Although these individuals went through magnetometers and other levels of screening, their entry into the White House is unacceptable and indefensible.

The U.S. Secret Service relies heavily on the professionalism and training of our men and women to make informed decisions based upon sound judgment. In this case, I fully acknowledge that proper procedures were not followed and human error occurred in the execution of our duties. This flaw has not changed our agency standard which is to be right 100 percent of the time. This event does not represent the quality of protection that the dedicated men and women of this agency provides every day. This past year, we processed more than 1.2 million visitors into the White House without incident.

In our profession, however, there is no margin for error. I realize many people share our disappointment in this incident. As an agency, we will continue to remain our harshest critic and take the necessary actions to remedy this issue and continue to successfully carry out our critical mission. I am extremely confident and proud of the work of our men and women and the security measures we put in place on a daily basis at the White House, the Vice Presidential residence, and the thousands of venues located throughout the world which are visited by those we protect.

The men and women of the U.S. Secret Service work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Their sacrifice and commitment make us the agency that the American people can be proud of and depend on. As a career special agent, I am confident in our men and women and in our ability to successfully execute our mission.

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and Members of the committee, I am willing to answer questions at this time. However, any questions regarding our security procedures will need to be discussed in a closed setting.

Additionally, I would like to respectfully advise this committee that, due to the fact that this is an on-going investigation, I am unable to answer any question regarding the potential criminal aspect of this incident here or in a closed setting. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Director Sullivan, for your testimony.

I will remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question Mr. Sullivan.

I recognize myself for the beginning question. Director Sullivan, let me be clear that all of us support the men and women of the Secret Service. There is no question about it. Our oversight responsibility, though, is when situations like this occur, we have to look at them. We have to do our job. It is in that pursuit of doing our job that this hearing is being held today.

In addition to that, there are a couple of questions I would like to just get on the record. Who is responsible for security at the White House?

Mr. SULLIVAN. The U.S. Secret Service is responsible for that security, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. The U.S. Secret Service. Who is responsible for access control at the White House?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We are, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. How many checkpoints are we normally manning from an access control at the White House at any point at the State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. For this particular event, we had three vehicle checkpoints, and we had two pedestrian checkpoints.

Chairman THOMPSON. Okay. At each checkpoint, did those individuals have lists of the guests that would be in attendance?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, they did, Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. The two individuals in question, the Salahis, were they on any of those lists?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They were not.

Chairman THOMPSON. It is your testimony before us today that they should not have been allowed entrance to this event because they were not on the list?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct.

Chairman THOMPSON. Just for the record, if an individual is not on a list, what is the procedure?

Mr. SULLIVAN. The procedure would be that they should not be allowed entry at that point.

For this particular event, the protocol would be that that officer should contact their immediate supervisor, the supervisor would get together with an individual from the White House staff. They

would determine if, in fact, that individual was cleared to come in. Additionally, we could call over to our control center to see if these names had been provided for clearance.

Chairman THOMPSON. Did any of this occur on the evening in question?

Mr. SULLIVAN. It did not.

Chairman THOMPSON. Have you identified all of the personnel who would have been responsible for this not occurring?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, right now, that is on-going. We have identified three individuals right now. We continue to investigate. We have done—since this occurred, we have done numerous interviews. We continue to go back and re-interview people. But right now, we have three individuals who we have identified, but I am not sure if that will change or not. But right now, we are—one thing we are sure of, the checkpoint where this did occur.

Chairman THOMPSON. So they were not on the list. Have you determined how an individual not on the list could gain entrance to this event?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I have, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. Is that something you are comfortable in sharing in this setting or like to do it in another setting?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would be happy to share that. We had established protocols. They weren't followed. What we find is that if the protocols are followed, we won't run into this type of a situation. Clearly, this protocol was not followed. A mistake was made, an error in judgment, and that allowed these two individuals who should not have been allowed entry into the White House.

Chairman THOMPSON. Can you tell us whether or not any other individuals may have gained entry into the White House in a similar manner this evening?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, that was a concern on my part as well. I can tell you that our investigation indicates that no other individuals were allowed entry that evening that should not have been allowed to come in.

Chairman THOMPSON. The one question that—because these individuals were not on the list, they did not get vetted or anything like that, do you think this not occurring provided any risk to those individuals who attended the State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, like everyone, I am extremely disappointed that these people were able to enter the White House. However, I would say that these people went through every layer of security that every other individual went through going into that building. Again, I would be more than happy to talk about what those levels of security are in a closed briefing.

But I would say, from a risk perspective, I feel confident based on what I have heard, based on what I have seen, based on what I have been briefed on, they did not provide a risk to the President.

Chairman THOMPSON. So you are comfortable in making that statement?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am comfortable in making that statement, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

I yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Director, my understanding is that the Salahis when they went to the first checkpoint and their name was not on the list——

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am sorry, Mr. King.

Mr. KING. My understanding is that when the Salahis came to the first checkpoint, their name was not on the list, and they told the Secret Service agent that they should be on the list, and they had been invited, and they talked themselves through. Is that a fair analysis? Or is that part of the investigation?

Mr. SULLIVAN. It is part of the investigation. What I will tell you is that these two individuals did show up at the list representing themselves to be on the list. Our officer looked at the guest list, did not see their names there, and allowed them to proceed to the next checkpoint to have their names checked up there.

Mr. KING. My understanding is, and I have seen this personally myself, often—not often—but certainly at times, people who should be on the list are not. When they say they are on the list—should be on the list and they are not, somebody from the Social Secretary's Office is there. The Secret Service agent hands the guests over to the Social Secretary and goes back to processing those who are next in line. Is that the way it has been done in the past?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, for every event that we have at the White House, we have a planning meeting with the White House staff. We did have a planning meeting for this particular visit. During that planning meeting, we all agree about what our predetermined responsibility will be for that particular event. In this meeting, we agreed that at that particular checkpoint, we would take control of the list.

Mr. KING. Let me just ask you, have you had any other events at the White House, certainly one of significance, a State Dinner, where there was no one from the Social Secretary's Office there with the Secret Service?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I have asked our people to go back and look at that. We have seen other events where that has occurred. It does not happen often, but we have seen other events, Mr. King, where that does in fact occur.

Mr. KING. Do you know if it has happened at any previous State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do not know that. But I can get back to you on that.

Mr. KING. This is a hypothetical. If, when they come up to the security checkpoint and they said we are on the list, the Secret Service agent says you are not, if there had been somebody from the Social Secretary's Office there, would the agent have referred them to these Social Secretary's Office and continued to process those on line?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I believe what they would have done is they would have worked the issue together. I don't think that the officer would have totally just dismissed it to that particular person. I would think that that——

Mr. KING. I don't mean to dismiss it. Would they wait to see what the Social Secretary's Office could find and then come back to the Secret Service agent rather than the Secret Service agent stop processing everyone on line ahead of them and just deal with this individual or these individuals?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. King, I think that is one of the things we talked about in our after-action review of this as we talked with the White House staff. I believe we both recognized that there is a need to have somebody there from the White House, and that is why, as we saw yesterday, new guidelines were put out where, for all of these events in the future, without exception, there will be somebody there from the White House staff.

Mr. KING. Won't those guidelines be similar to almost everything that has been done before, other than last week?

Mr. SULLIVAN. You know, again, Mr. King, many of the events we have done over the past 9 or 10 months, there have been people from the White House staff at this checkpoint. For this particular event, prior to this event, we agreed that we would control that, and there would be somebody from the White House staff——

Mr. KING. Excuse me. My time is starting to run out. You said it was agreed. Who initiated that? Did you ask the Social Secretary's Office not to be there, or did they ask not be there?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I just know that that is what the result of our meeting was, sir.

Mr. KING. But isn't it unusual for all of these events—I think I have been to over 40 of them. Probably all of my colleagues have been to a similar amount, whether it is Christmas parties or barbecues, an occasional State Dinner, we always see somebody, whether it is the Social Secretary's Office, the President's staff, Legislative Affairs, there is always someone there with the Secret Service. It is interesting to me that for this one event, the most important one of the year, where you have a prime minister from a country which was attacked by terrorists last year, that at this event, which is also a larger crowd, with rain expected, the Social Secretary's Office just left, and the Secret Service was there by itself.

Listen, I thank you for accepting responsibility. But the only way we can find out as to who initiated this change and what the real procedure is going to be in the future and why it was done this way last Tuesday, to me, we can't do it unless we have someone from the White House having the guts to come down here and testify instead of hiding behind a phony claim of separation of powers.

I yield back.

Mr. SULLIVAN. The only thing I would say, Mr. King, is that, during that meeting, it was agreed upon that there would be people from the White House staff available in a roving capacity. Again, I take responsibility for the fact that we did have that available to us. That is what should have been—those people just should have been stopped there, and we should have called for someone to come out and to help expedite——

Mr. KING. If there had been someone next to the Secret Service agent, this would not have happened. They wouldn't have gotten in. If someone from the Social Secretary's Office was standing where they have always stood in the past, the Salahis would not have gotten in.

Mr. SULLIVAN. It would have helped.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Just for the record again, no one would have been allowed in that event if they had not been vetted. Am I correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Whether they talked to the Social Secretary or whomever.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, if you would just yield for a moment. My understanding is that they got left off the list.

Chairman THOMPSON. No. Let me——

Mr. KING. That is the purpose of having the Social Secretary there.

Chairman THOMPSON. I defer to your questions.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am sorry, Chairman. All I was going to say is, there have been occasions where people have shown up, that have not been vetted, where we will have conversation with the White House staff, and those people have been allowed to enter. That is very rare, but there are—on occasion, people have come. If both the White House staff and us agree—and this is in every—not just this administration but other administrations—where if we feel there is a need for those individuals to be let through who haven't been vetted, and we and the staff are both in agreement with that, those people will be allowed in. But that is to answer your question, not what happened here.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

The gentlelady from California for 5 minutes, Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Sullivan, for being before us today. First, let me begin by saying I think the Secret Service does a great job, and it saddens me to see that there was such a lapse this time at the White House.

In the past, I know that there has always been close communication between the Social Secretary for the White House, legislative—Legislative Affairs, for example, if we are going to have the Congresspeople that are going to come for the Christmas party.

Every single time that I have entered the White House, there has always been somebody from the President's—from the White House there at the very first point before you ever even get to the checkpoint where they check your purses, et cetera. Every time. Even if it has just been a meeting with the President over a particular policy, there has always been somebody out there.

So my question—the first question I have for you is, in this preplanning meeting, did you all decide that no one would be specifically assigned from the Social Secretary's Office or Legislative Affairs or what have you at the first checkpoint? Was that a decision made? Because I heard you say there were going to be roving people. But was there a definite decision that nobody would be standing next to the Secret Service as people first made entry or attempts to come into the event?

Mr. SULLIVAN. My understanding, Congresswoman, is that there was an agreement that, at that initial checkpoint, we would man—we would have that list on our own, and that if any discrepancy did come up, that we would then call for somebody—that person was to call for their supervisor, and they, in fact, would get in contact with somebody from the staff, who was down around the main entrance point at the East Wing, and they would be available to come out and help out with the issue.

Ms. SANCHEZ. So your feeling is that your first Secret Service agent who was standing there with the list and realized that the couple in question was not on there, that in fact they—their purpose was then to call over somebody from the White House and confer as to what to do with that person?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Correct.

Ma'am, every day, we have people show up to various gates at the White House, who just show up; they want to come in.

Every day, our people make the appropriate phone calls, appropriate contact to see if maybe we have missed something on our list and if, in fact, these people are expected to arrive.

I look at this no different. For me, this began and ended at that checkpoint. It was a simple protocol, a simple procedure that we had in place, that if somebody came up who wasn't on the list, make contact with somebody who could come and help you expedite that individual in or determine if, in fact, they should be turned away.

Ms. SANCHEZ. That is why it surprises me, because every time I have been to the White House and I have had a guest that has been vetted ahead of time with Social Security number and everything else we need to supply and showing IDs, there are still times when we are set aside and said, wait, we don't have your guest on the list, let's talk about this.

But it has always come not—in conjunction with somebody from the White House. So, why, in this particular instance, because I have never seen this instance before, and it has been under three Presidents that I have been going to the White House, Democrats and Republicans, that I have never just seen a Secret Service agent, in particular, with such an important process, with so many important people waiting in line to get through, why do you—why would you all agree that no person from the White House would be standing there, first of all, to greet guests, which is one of the most important things that the Social Secretary should be doing at that point, but at the same time, if there were problems, to immediately be able to take care of them and start some chain of line to figure out, is this person here? Why ahead of time, for one of the—I have never seen this happen before. Why would you all agree to that?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would acknowledge that I believe that is very rare. I haven't seen that happen myself all that often, and I do believe that the statement, the memorandum that was put out by the White House yesterday, I believe that they recognized that as well and that they stated in that memorandum that we are there to work as partners, to make sure we get everybody in that should get in and prevent people from getting in that shouldn't get in. I do believe that, because of this particular issue last week, I think there was a recognition by all of us, that that is the way things should be done, and I think, going forward—I know, going forward that is the way things are going to be done.

Ms. SANCHEZ. I thank you for taking responsibility, but I think there is a lot of responsibility that should be spread out on this.

Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Souder.

Mr. SOUDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sullivan, you have used checkpoint repeatedly. Were there points—two or one that had a list?

Mr. SULLIVAN. There were two, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. So it wasn't a point. It was checkpoints that failed?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. The list that you are referring to, was the list provided to you by the Social Secretary or is this a list that has been—Social Security numbers have been vetted, there has been background checks on the individuals that might have turned up, some of the questionable things in this couple's background and who they were associated with, was the list a Social Secretary list of who we invited, or was it a vetted list?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I believe I have this right, and if I don't, we will correct it.

What happens before the event, the White House staff will give us a list of all the people that have been invited. We will then take that list, and they will also provide us with name and date of birth and Social Security number. We will then run all those—we will do the appropriate record checks for all those individuals. If anything does come up that would lead us to believe that somebody should not be let into the White House, we would get back to the White House staff on that.

Once that—once all that vetting is done, we will get back to the White House staff on that, and then they will give us back a complete list of who is going to be attending that event.

Mr. SOUDER. So for the Social Secretary's Office or anyone from the White House or for any influential individual to walk up and say this individual should be allowed in, you said, you think that has been done in the past without vetting, or would they also have to say that this individual has been vetted before?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would say that that would be a very, very rare occasion. I would say if, perhaps, it was a Member from the Hill or if it was some other individual who is a family friend; I mean, this would have to be someone that is known to them. We would talk through, and we would allow them into the White House. But, again, that would be when all of us are comfortable, and we know who we are dealing with. But again, that is very rare occurrence, sir.

Mr. SOUDER. The Salahis have been flashing all over the National media e-mails that suggest that there could have been a potential of a mistake, showing that they had exchanges, asked to be on the list; that they were supposed to be called back. But then they claimed that they were gone and hadn't heard it. Did they show those e-mails that the whole country knows exist now?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, that gets into the elements of our criminal investigation, and again, I cannot, based upon information in conversation we had with the U.S. Attorney's Office, I just would prefer not to talk about that.

Mr. SOUDER. One of my concerns—because this feels like, as they say, deja vu all over again. When I was first elected to Congress, and we came in—I was elected in 1994. We came in on the Govern-

ment Oversight Committee. We started a whole round of investigations in 1995 and 1996 about White House clearances, and the question was, Dick Morris and the Thomasons were not on a clearance list, yet they were coming into the White House regularly. That led to a whole question of having clearance lists with dead people on it, with people who shouldn't have been on the list, who was holding those lists. That led to questions of what the coding on the list was. That is how we found LB meant Lincoln Bedroom.

We have been through this before with the Secret Service. We have asked this to be clarified and fixed. The question was, in looking at a casual visit of some individuals and the slip-up on the list, it led to a fundamental question about how and when these lists are changed. Because you said, well, they went through all the checks, and there was no danger to the President or the Prime Minister of India.

If there is no danger, why do you do background checks? That is a fundamental question, because casual visitors from Indiana to see the White House Christmas tree are subjected to background checks. You just said here that it didn't matter really that you didn't do the background checks because they had been vetted at so many points, and there was no danger to the President. Was there danger to the President or not danger to the President? If there isn't danger to the President because you have all these different points to see that they don't have a gun, they don't have these things, why do you vet every visitor to see the White House Christmas tree?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, doing background checks are one level of our security. Just because we do a background check on somebody that comes back they have no record, to me that does not mean that there is no danger.

Mr. SOUDER. But my question is, you said there was no danger to the President because they went through all of these things to show that they basically didn't pose a threat. Is that correct? Was there a threat to the President or not a threat to the President?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, we have countermeasures in place, and I am confident in telling you that there was no threat to the President.

Last week, sir, we took him to a basketball game with 5,000 people, and he was surrounded by those 5,000 people.

Mr. SOUDER. I understand that. But why do you then run a background check on every individual that is coming in when they aren't even going to see the President, they are not going to get their picture taken with the President, they are not going to get their picture taken with the Vice President, they are not going to see all these other people there in a one-on-one type of thing, why do you run less of a background check on individuals there than you would on a casual visitor? Because you said sometimes it is waived. You said there was no danger. The presumption is you are doing a background check because there is a potential danger.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, would I have liked to have stopped those people at that checkpoint? I would have. Do I think those people should have been name-checked? I do.

But does that mean there was a danger to the President because two people came in who weren't name-checked? I don't believe it does. I believe that our levels of security, I believe that we keep

agents in close proximity to those people that we protect. Our agents—if we thought that doing a name-check was going to secure his safety, then we wouldn't have any more security, and the White House would tell all of our people that they could stand down.

We don't believe that. We know, with all due respect to those 400 people that came to the White House last week, we continue to look at all those people, even though they have gone through name-checks, no matter who those people were. Our agents, when people are walking up to a photo shoot, we are looking at those people as they approach. We are looking at their body language. We are looking at their gestures. We are looking at any type of furtive action there. You know, we don't rely on just any one level of security here. We look at multiple layers of security. Again, I would be more than happy to talk to you about that in a closed setting.

But we do do background checks.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentlelady from California for 5 minutes, Ms. Harman.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sullivan, I applaud you for taking full responsibility for this incident. It is not an easy thing to do, but you haven't flinched. You are right that, as you said, "in our line of work, we can't afford even one mistake."

As you can see, everyone on this committee, on a bipartisan basis, views this as a security issue. Hopefully none of us cares whether *Us Weekly* is covering it. We care whether the life of our President and high-level officials from our country and from India and others were protected at last week's event. We care very much going forward whether there are lessons learned. I think that ought to be clear. Certainly that is what I care about.

I focused in eight terms of Congress on security issues. That is my passion. That is what I do. I chair the Intelligence Subcommittee of this committee, and on numerous occasions, I have been briefed by you on threats to the President of the United States and what the Secret Service is doing about them. I have been to your headquarters to see firsthand what you do. I want to thank you and the people who work for you for your service. Again, I want to thank you for taking responsibility, full responsibility, for this incident.

My questions are about, what will we do going forward? What will we do differently? All of us remember the so-called purple tunnel of doom at the inauguration. That was, I thought, a demonstration of poor crowd control by your agency and other agencies at a large outdoor event. That is not the same as this event. But it causes me to ask some questions.

I think that entering the White House should not be like shopping at a big box retailer the day after Thanksgiving. I am sure you agree. Going forward, tens of thousands of people are going to be at the White House in December looking at the Christmas decorations and attending a number of receptions. We are all going Monday night with guests, and we have submitted the Social Security numbers and the dates of birth of those guests, and we know they are being vetted and think they should be.

So my question is: Should we have a better business model here for large crowds and smaller crowds? I attended recently the Bruce Springsteen concert in Washington. It was quite wonderful. I just want you all to know. Some of you may have gone. But it was also a very smooth security experience. Tickets were received well in advance. They were printed on high-tech tamperproof paper. They came with bar codes that were quickly scanned for authenticity. There were no lines. There was no confusion. There was no security problem.

I am not suggesting that Christmas at the White House is a Bruce Springsteen concert. But I am suggesting that there may be more modern techniques for screening people who are trying to enter the White House building.

Let me finally suggest, too, that, as this committee knows, layered security always works better. Ms. Sanchez and I have collaborated for years on port security, and that is what we have put in place. So, in that regard, I very much applaud her comments about the Social Secretary's Office. A Social Secretary participation in screening people adds to layered security, and I sure hope those lessons have been learned.

So my question to you is: Do we have the right security model here? Are there things that you can improve immediately with respect to screening people who will come to the White House next month? Are there things that this committee, either legislatively or informally, should be working on to make your job more effective?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you.

I agree with you. One of the things we do is we are continually looking at our methods and our procedures. That is not just because of this event. We do that continually. We are continually looking at how technology can help us out, you know, X-ray machines and other types of technology. We have a Technology Working Group, which is not just our organization, but it is other Federal organizations, the academia. We are dealing with all of those people out there in a partnership to see if we can come up with the best methodology to expedite people through and to make sure that we do it in a way that is going to be nonintrusive and make sure that it is very efficient.

I would say that, in this particular case, again, I don't think any level of technology, I don't think any level of funding is the reason for why this happened. Pure and simple, this is a human error. We could have had the best technology. We could have had all the funding that we would ever want. But this still would not have prevented this from happening.

If people don't follow the established guidelines, it is going—something like this is going to happen. As I said before, we put 1.2 million people through the White House over this past year, and all those people were put through without an incident because we did follow procedure. So I do agree with you that we need to continually look at technology and whatever methodologies that are out there to ensure that we get people in as safely as we can. I do think that that didn't matter in this particular situation.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would just say that it is too bad that it takes a royal screw-up for us to regain the urgency we need about security in this country. I wish the press were as tentative to the issue of the sunsetting of three major provisions of the PATRIOT Act that will occur at the end of this month unless we act on it, including the lone-wolf provision, which the Judiciary Committee deemed should be dropped on the very day that we had a lone-wolf attack, a domestic lone-wolf attack at Fort Hood.

I hope we don't have to have a royal screw-up with respect to security in a larger sense for us to get the attention of the media on something like that.

Let me just ask you, Mr. Director, first of all, from your testimony, you do not make up the list of the invitees, correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct.

Mr. LUNGREN. The White House does?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LUNGREN. You vet the names given to you on that list; is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct.

Mr. LUNGREN. So your officers are not responsible for the list and would not know why someone is on the list or not on the list from an invitation list rather than a vetting situation, correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That would be correct.

Mr. LUNGREN. So it seems to me it would be logical, it would be helpful to have someone from the White House with your personnel at the time the decision is made when someone presents themselves to the White House who is not on the list.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir. I believe there is an acknowledgement that——

Mr. LUNGREN. So let me ask you, you said there was a decision made beforehand that that would not be the case here. Was that your recommendation?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, that was a recommendation that we made together as——

Mr. LUNGREN. Well, so it was your recommendation?

Mr. SULLIVAN. It was a joint recommendation.

Mr. LUNGREN. Why would you make that kind of a recommendation?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, we looked through the issue of last week. We sat down. We talked about this. When I say "my recommendation," we had our people get together with the White House staff, they looked at the events surrounding last week——

Mr. LUNGREN. Sir, I don't need to know the process. I want to know, why? That is the question. Why would you or members of your staff decide that it would make sense not to have somebody from the White House at both of those—well, however many points there were with your personnel?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Do you mean, why did we make the decision that there was nobody—I am sorry, sir.

Mr. LUNGREN. Why would you make the recommendation? Why did you make a recommendation? You said it was a shared rec-

ommendation. Why did someone from the Secret Service decide that made sense?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I believe, in looking at what happened last week—we again, sir, we have done this with, not only this administration but with previous administrations where we have taken responsibility for that list. This is the first time that we had a breakdown based on our people accepting that responsibility.

Mr. LUNGREN. So it has been done in the past?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LUNGREN. Has it been done when you have a State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. As I mentioned earlier, I don't know that. But I would be more than happy to get that information.

Mr. LUNGREN. So you don't know whether it has ever been done when you have had a head of state of a nation that has been the subject of a recent terrorist attack?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do not know that.

Mr. LUNGREN. I will just say, for the record, if your folks made that recommendation, if you made that recommendation, it is inconceivable to me why you would do that. All you needed to do was have someone from the White House standing there. That is too much to ask. That is what they are supposed to do. Frankly, I——

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I think there is a misunderstanding then. Are you saying, did we make the recommendation 2 weeks ago during the planning period that we would be there by ourselves?

Mr. LUNGREN. Yes. That is the question I just asked you.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, no. I apologize. As I said, they had a planning meeting prior to that event.

Mr. LUNGREN. I understand. I am just asking whether your folks made the recommendation that that ought not to be—that you ought not to have someone from the White House there.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I don't know who made the recommendation. All I know is that, in the planning, an agreement was made that we would take that list and that there would be other individuals available from the White House staff that would respond to that checkpoint to help with any discrepancy.

Mr. LUNGREN. I am just trying to ask, did that come from your side of the house?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I don't know that.

Mr. LUNGREN. Will your investigation reveal that?

Mr. SULLIVAN. It will.

Mr. LUNGREN. Okay.

You talked about layered security. I am an absolute believer in layered security. But the fact of the matter here is that one of the layers was not there, correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would say, sir, that the protocol was not adhered to.

Mr. LUNGREN. Well, I would say one of the layers was not there.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I would say that there was a breakdown in that layer. That is what I would say.

Mr. LUNGREN. You say "human error" repeatedly. You said procedures were not followed. You said it was unacceptable, and you said it was indefensible. Normally when you have an organization where you have a screw-up like that, there are consequences that flow from that.

What I mean by that is this: The only way you are going to assure that you don't have screw-ups in the future—and you said it yourself; we can't afford to have a screw-up. It doesn't matter how many millions of people go through; you can't afford to have a screw-up. Or as has been said many times, terrorists only need to be successful once. We have to be successful all the time. The consequences after the review takes place, are there going to be consequences for people who made the human error, or are we just going to shrug our shoulders, and say, well, it was human error?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, right now the individuals who have been identified have been put on administrative leave, and beyond that, I would prefer not to go further. But I will tell you that we are going to look at this. We are going to find out what the culpability was, and we will take the appropriate action.

Mr. LUNGREN. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentlelady from the District of Columbia for 5 minutes, Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate that you so quickly accepted responsibility, Mr. Sullivan. That is what we expect from a great police force, and that is what the Secret Service is, and that is more than the Salahis, who have done—who continue to indicate they were invited, even in the face of the evidence, and are a no-show at this hearing where they could have explained themselves fully, as you are doing today.

You indicated earlier in your testimony—I think I am quoting you—no others entered. But how did you discover that the Salahis had entered? Did you discover it through their Facebook, or was it your own discovery that some interlopers had entered?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We did not discover that on our own. We were advised of it the following day.

Ms. NORTON. Advised by whom, sir?

Mr. SULLIVAN. The Facebook.

Ms. NORTON. So, for all we know, there were other interlopers there, because this mistake was made. These con artists who are so hungry for publicity exposed and revealed themselves. You see the danger I am speaking of, sir?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Ma'am, that was a concern of mine as well. That is something that we have focused on. I cannot talk about it in this setting, but I believe I can satisfy you in explaining that there were no other people there that night that should not have been.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I am going to have to be satisfied to that end in private.

I was at the State Dinner. Once you got through that checkpoint, I don't know how you could say to this committee you were sure that no others got in, especially since we have a precedent for someone who did get in. So I think the committee has to know how they can assure us that there were no other interlopers.

For all of the twittering about the Social Secretary and these serial con artists, what I see is that this couple has pioneered a new way to breach security. Forget about all of your barriers, forget about your IDs; be a poser, that will get you in quicker than anything else.

Let me tell you what my concern is, Mr. Sullivan. It is well known, it has been in the press over and over again that this President has received far more death threats than any President in the history of the United States, an alarming number of death threats. I am not going to ask you for the details on that. But here we had the first State Dinner, not of just any old President, but of the first African-American President. Was there any attempt to increase security, given all you know, which is much more than we know, about threats to this President of the United States?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Ma'am, no matter who the President is——

Ms. NORTON. I am asking about this President, and my question is very specific. Given death threats to this President, was there any attempt to increase the security at this event? Yes or no?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I cannot talk about that.

No. 1, I will address the threats. I have heard a number out there that the threat is up by 400 percent. I am not sure where that number——

Ms. NORTON. Is it up at all? We are not asking for the——

Mr. SULLIVAN. I think I can answer you, ma'am. It is not at 400 percent. I am not sure where that number came from.

Chairman THOMPSON. Just a minute. We can't hear the gentleman.

Ms. NORTON. Please don't assign to me a number in my question. I just asked you if the threats were up. Are the threats up?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They are not. The threats right now, in the inappropriate interest that we are seeing, is the same level as it has been for the previous two Presidents at this point——

Ms. NORTON. This is very comforting news. Let me ask you, reportedly there were as many as three or four times as many people at this State Dinner, had to be held in a tent-like building, is that not the case?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I believe there were 400 people, yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. There are normally about 100, 120 people.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. Did you have extra forces, extra people on the ground to assist you with this State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, ma'am. We will always adjust our security plan depending upon the——

Ms. NORTON. Were there extra people, given the fact that there were three or four times as many people at this State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, there were.

Ms. NORTON. Where would you have gotten them from? I ask you that because a recent internal report of the Congressional Research said if there were an evaluation of the Service's missions, it might be determined that it is ineffective to conduct its protection mission and investigate financial crimes.

Were D.C. police there to help you?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do not believe so.

Ms. NORTON. Well, do you need more people? Do you have enough people who are Secret Service people when you have to cover three times as many people, or perhaps more, at a State Dinner?

Mr. SULLIVAN. No, ma'am. The No. 1 priority of our organization is to protect the President. We are always going to have enough re-

sources, enough people to protect him. We had the appropriate level of staffing at that event last Tuesday. The number of people we had was not the issue.

Ms. NORTON. When you questioned the Salahis, were they under oath?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Ma'am, I can't get into that because of our investigation.

Ms. NORTON. You can't tell us whether they were under oath or not? You have submitted the transcripts; I am simply asking you, were they under oath or not?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Are you talking about were they under oath when they came to the checkpoint?

Ms. NORTON. No. When you interviewed them, when your officers interviewed them.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Ma'am, I have been informed by the U.S. Attorney's Office that I cannot talk about any aspect of the investigation we have on-going.

Chairman THOMPSON. We plan, at the end of the hearing, to go into a more structured setting so we can get some of these questions answered.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I apologize for that, but I just can't go into those elements of the investigation.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Alabama for 5 minutes, Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to go back to this preplanning event with the White House. You said that you all mutually agreed to not have a person from the White House staff at the checkpoint. Who suggested that at that meeting?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I don't know that, sir.

Mr. ROGERS. Do you know who was in that meeting?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do not.

Mr. ROGERS. Can you get us the information of who was in that meeting for the preplanning?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROGERS. Also, I would like to ask, in follow-up to Ms. Norton's questions about when this came to your attention, it is my understanding from a *Washington Post* story that the night of the event, during the State Dinner, a Roxanne Roberts, who was at the event, went over to a White House staffer and told them that they didn't believe, when the Salahis were announced, that they were supposed to be there. Were you aware of that?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am aware of that.

Mr. ROGERS. Did you read that story?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes.

Mr. ROGERS. Can you tell us anything about that conversation, what it yielded?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We did read that, and that is part of our investigation, which I cannot get into.

Mr. ROGERS. So you don't know or you can't tell us if that White House staffer that was informed about the Salahis did or did not go to a Secret Service agent and communicate that information?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I cannot comment on that.

Mr. ROGERS. Okay. You talked earlier about not being on the list, that in the past there have been events where a staffer would come over and say, yeah, we want to go ahead and let them in.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Again, that is not as much about an event, but just somebody might come to the White House—again, a Congressperson or a friend of the family may come to the White House at some time during the day wanting to get in. Our officers will always call the appropriate people to find out if in fact this person has been invited. They may not be on a list, but clearly, because of their friendship, because of their position, because they are known to the family or they do have a legitimate reason to be there, we are not going to turn those people away; we are going to work with the staff and make sure that we get those people in. I think we have to come to a level of common sense here that there are people that have a legitimate reason to be there, the staff wants them in there, if they have a meeting and they just somehow didn't get on a list, we are going to ensure that we get those people through.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I understand that in a daytime setting, but in a large venue event—and you would think at the White House it would be the easiest to adhere to those protocols that you talked about earlier. But as you mentioned, there are many venues away from the White House where the thought of somebody being waved in by a staffer is frightening because we don't know who that staffer is and what their background is and what their connections may be.

Mr. SULLIVAN. But again, this would be, sir, again, this is more the exception; it is for those people that we both agree, yes, in fact, that they should come in. Both parties are both confident that that person should be in. If I gave the impression that we did this for parties or a State Dinner, I apologize, because that wasn't my intent. My intent is that there are people who show up at the White House on occasion, mainly during the day, mainly for a business reason, that if they need to get in, we are going to work with the staff and we are going to ensure that they are allowed to get in.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I think Ms. Norton raised a good point a little while ago when she emphasized that this has probably happened many times.

Mr. SULLIVAN. What has happened many times?

Mr. ROGERS. That what happened at this State Dinner has probably happened many times. We just didn't know about it because they didn't post it on their Facebook and go out and brag about it.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I would say absolutely not. I would say that this is an aberration. Again, we take our protection duties very, very seriously; protecting the White House is our No. 1 priority. I do not believe—I know that this has not happened many times before or any time before.

Mr. ROGERS. Well, I hope not. This is a pretty scary scenario when you think about the President of the United States being exposed to somebody who just walked in off the street.

You made the statement earlier that you felt like the President was not in danger, well, maybe not in this case, but the fact is these people could have been bad guys who could have been carrying biological or chemical agents on them. The President could

have been in danger. Just because they didn't have a gun that was revealed from a magnetometer does not mean that he or the Vice President or the Prime Minister were not in danger.

I would like to think, going forward in the future, that no person who was not on the list could get into the White House, no matter what staffer tried to wave them through because you do have these pre-event protocols that are followed for a reason.

But I would love to hear your response to the danger they may or may not have been exposed to without the party crasher having a gun or not.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, the chem/bio issue you brought up, I would be more than happy to address that in a classified briefing, but those are countermeasures that we do take into account. Again, I would not want to talk about those in here.

Make no doubt about it, I am not trying to minimize the fact regarding the danger here. I don't like what happened. None of us want to see that happen here. But I am confident in our levels of security, in our men and women that are protecting the President in close proximity to him in all the situations we put him in. Sir, we travel all over the country. It is very difficult protecting a President in a democracy, and it is our job to make sure that that person is able to get out their agenda, get out their message and have access to people. We deal with these types of situations every day.

As it has been said, if we had our way, we would put them in a bubble; we know we can't do that. We want to make sure that we are able to get that person out there, no matter who it is, and allow them to get out their message, allow them to get out their agenda. I will tell you that we do it every day. We have to let people have access to them. But we do have people that are prepared to react to any type of threat in close proximity. I am confident in our people.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Mr. Sullivan, you are right, you have the responsibility of protecting our President. You know, in a letter that I wrote to the Secretary of Homeland Security—which I believe should be more intimately involved in this issue as we go forward—I indicated my appreciation for the brave men and women that serve in the Secret Service, and I will never step back from that representation.

I also acknowledge the fact that you have said there is no margin for error. I want to applaud you for the 1.2 million people that have come in securely, and I want to join you in recognizing that you staff-up, man-up and woman-up when you need to, but I want to join my colleagues and say this is a time to understand what happened and what kind of resources going forward.

So let me say to you that my perspective is that this is a law enforcement issue, a criminal activity that could have generated into a horrific incident at a State Dinner in Washington, DC in the White House in what has been classified as the most powerful Nation in the world in the backdrop of a Mumbai incident that occurred a year almost to the day of the visit of the Prime Minister of the great country of India.

So I would like to just show you how severe I think these circumstances are. We have seen these over and over again. Severe, absolutely severe, because the person standing there was not vetted, and to the report that you have supported to us, was not on any list. Severe. When we see a picture that we have seen over and over again on the—severe; violation and potential threat to the President and Vice President of the United States. Again, in another location altogether, in an uninvited circumstance, standing with the United States military. I am sure that they could take care of themselves, but severe. At the same time, the Prime Minister of the nation that suffered this terrorist act was there.

So let me focus on why I believe this is a law enforcement issue. You may not be able to discuss a lot of it, but let me quickly go through my point.

At 15th and Alexander Hamilton Place, was there a Secret Service personnel there?

Mr. SULLIVAN. There was.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Did that Secret Service personnel inquire of the Salahis—who I believe came, according to your report, to that checkpoint—were they invited guests?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Those people presented themselves as being invited.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Was there a discussion?

Mr. SULLIVAN. There was, as far as I know.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. In your report it says they insisted they were invited, and were allowed to proceed to the second pedestrian checkpoint.

Do you assume that if they insisted that they were invited, that they spoke to a Secret Service officer?

Mr. SULLIVAN. At the first checkpoint they did talk to one of our people.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. There was dialogue and conversation.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Correct.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Did they, in that dialogue and conversation, again speak to a Federal officer?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They did.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. With a Federal officer, are the actions of the individual speaking to a Federal officer covered by Federal law?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They are.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So let me proceed on the idea that in 18 U.S. 1001 it says that anyone who proceeds to falsify, conceal, or cover up by any trick, scheme, or device is violating a Federal law. We can talk about the Secret Service, who you have mentioned that you had more than a faux pas, the lives of these individuals were threatened. But we cannot get away from the fact that the Salahis are playing with the attitudes and the trends and the dangers of what we live in.

So I would like to offer into the record and ask you a question in particular, there is an e-mail that has the Salahis reporting that Senator Harry Reid and his wife, Kuma Gupta and her husband, and Bob Stevens and his wife will not be at the dinner. Can you tell me how they would have access to this kind of classified information? Is the White House list where people are not coming, is there a list printed saying these people will not show up?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Congresswoman, I don't know where they got that information from.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. There is also an additional statute that suggests in 18 U.S.C. 1036 that says entry by false pretenses to any real property, whoever by any fraud or false pretense enters or attempts to enter. Were they on the list, to your knowledge?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They were not on the list.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Do you believe if they entered onto the premises, discussing this with the Secret Service—who made a mistake, more than what we would like—did they enter on false pretenses?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Ma'am, as I said before, we are in the middle of a criminal investigation here. The U.S. Attorney's Office——

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I understand that you may not be able to answer. Did they enter with approval, in terms of being on a list, to your knowledge?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Again, ma'am, they were not on the list. But it is our mistake because they weren't on the list and we let them through.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. They were not on the list, and therefore not vetted; is that your understanding?

Mr. SULLIVAN. They were not vetted.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Is the White House considered a Federal building?

Mr. SULLIVAN. It is.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, I just simply want to submit into the record four or five—I don't know if we are having a second round—but four or five of these e-mails that reflect the knowledge of the Salahis that they were not invited, and their misrepresentation in a very, very large and conspicuous way.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

E-MAILS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:52 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email

Importance: High

Hi Michele.

Thank you for this.

The best way to reach me is on my direct cell:

We are honored to take part of the Arrival Ceremony.

Thank you,
Tareq Salahi

-----Original Message-----
From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:49 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email

Hi Tareq,

Hopefully I can get tickets for the Arrival Ceremony...the State Dinner is completely closed and has been for awhile. As soon as I know, I will contact you. What is the best way to reach you?

Until then,

Michele

Ms. Michele S. Jones
Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense White House Liaison

Department of Defense // Pentagon // [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:37 PM
To: Jones, Michele CIV SD
Subject: FW: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email
Importance: High

Hi Michele ---- thank you!!!

We are really looking forward to it.

I am forwarding this to you just in case as additional back up.

Cheers,

Tareq Salahi

United States Polo Team Captain

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National Mall June 11 & 12, 2010

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:51 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: RE: URGENT: State Dinner / INDIA vs USA World Championships will be hosted in Washington DC 2010

Importance: High

Hi Michele,

By the way -- I know for a fact these persons are unable to attend the state dinner & the reception portion:

1.) Senator Harry Reid & his wife (they have gone home early for Thanksgiving)

2.) Kuma Gupta and husband (unable to travel to DC tomorrow)

3.) Bob Stevens and his wife(Top Brass from Lockheed Martin)

Cheers,
Tareq

-----Original Message-----
From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:45 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: URGENT: State Dinner / INDIA vs USA World Championships will be hosted in Washington DC 2010
Importance: High

Hi Michele,

Thank you.

The USA vs INDIA America's World Cup Championships will be what is recognized as the most significant cultural sporting event between the United States & India strengthening the bilateral relationship we share.

Here is the link to the front page of "The Telegraph" in India today.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1091123/jsp/frontpage/story_11773787.jsp

Here is a link from the US State Dept/US Embassy in New Delhi discussing how critical these cultural games are to the two nations to strengthen the bi-lateral relationship between the two.

http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr070509.html

Thank you,

Tareq Salahi
United States Team Captain

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National

Mall June 11 & 12, 2010 honoring the bi-lateral relationship between India & the United States of America in a historic first

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2009 1:38 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: Re: THANK YOU!!!

Tareq,

You are most welcome! I here the smile in your email and am delighted that you and Michaele had a wonderful time. :-)

Have an extraordinary Thanksgiving and many blessings to you both!

Much love,

Michele

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
To: Jones, Michele CIV SD
Cc: [redacted]
Sent: Wed Nov 25 01:03:26 2009
Subject: THANK YOU!!!

Hi Michele,
You are an Angel!
My cell phone battery died early this evening while we were in DC from our country home, so I just got you message now after driving back out. But obviously it worked out at the end... We ended up going to the gate to check in at 6:30pm to just check, in case it got approved since we didn't know, and our name was indeed on the list! ☺ We are very grateful. and God Bless you.
We just got home, and we had a wonderful evening as you can imagine!
Look forward to seeing you very soon. Say when for dinner – we cant wait to see you and catch up and share memories of a true lifetime.
With Love,
Tareq & Michaele Salahi

No virus found in this incoming message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 8.5.425 / Virus Database: 270.14.81/2524 - Release Date: 11/25/09 07:31:00

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I yield back.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Can I make one more comment to the Congresswoman? I feel I have to defend my boss here.

Secretary Napolitano has been intimately involved with me on this investigation. We have been speaking daily regarding this. We spoke about a half hour before I came up here for this testimony.

So I would not want to leave any indication nor have you under the impression that she has not been intimately involved with this. We have been talking daily about this issue.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to meeting with Secretary Napolitano. I am sure she will meet with the committee.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Texas for 5 minutes, Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I know there is an investigation underway and the U.S. Attorney's Office is looking at that. As a former Federal prosecutor, I know they will do a very thorough and diligent job in this case.

Mr. Sullivan, you brief us on a monthly basis, an intelligence briefing, threat briefing. I don't need to emphasize to you the

threat here. It is the first State Dinner. It has been pointed out the Prime Minister of India, who has also been a target, was at this State Dinner. India, which has been threatened by Pakistan, on the eve of the President giving his speech on Afghanistan, his policy dealing with Afghanistan and Pakistan, you have two major targets at the White House, and the idea that a couple could get in there without any—without their names being on the list, without any sort of vetting, if you will, without their Social Security numbers being submitted in advance, is really astounding.

Now, you were very candid in saying that established procedures were not followed, and I think that is very clear in this case. But how in the world could this couple get past the Secret Service without having their names on the list, without having their socials in advance, and get right up to the President of the United States?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I have asked myself that question a thousand times over the last week. What we keep coming back to here is that procedures weren't followed. Again, what we have found is when we follow the procedures, when we go by the protocols we have, these type of situations don't occur.

I would like to think that all these layers—and that is one thing we do, we realize when you put a plan together that things might not always go according to plan and that they might be imperfect. In this particular case, that is what happened. But I still do believe, because of all the countermeasures we have—which I would be more than happy to speak to you about in a closed session—I do believe that their safety was never in jeopardy.

But again, do I like to see this? Do any of our people like to see this? Believe me, we are beating ourselves up over it. We do not like to see this. When we have the Prime Minister of India come in, we give him the highest level of security, we put our best people on his detail.

Sir, I can tell you that I understand your concern, and I have the same concern, but I do think this is an aberration.

Mr. MCCAUL. Is there a protocol where White House officials can wave a guest in, even if they are not on the list and the Social Security numbers and background checks have not been done?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Again, sir, I would prefer not to get into our procedures on that. Every event is going to be different. But again, I would prefer not to get into that procedure.

Mr. MCCAUL. You said human error happened, and certainly it looks like in the Secret Service there was human error. What I want to know is whether anybody from the White House intervened to allow access to these individuals?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Congressman, this is our fault and our fault alone. There is no other people to blame here. You know, look at me and blame me. This is our fault.

Mr. MCCAUL. Well, you are certainly doing the job that Secret Service is known to be doing and taking full responsibility, but I think that is an issue we need to look into.

You mentioned this planning meeting that took place prior to this event. Were you at that meeting?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I was not.

Mr. MCCAUL. But the decision that came out of that meeting, was that the Social Secretary, it would not be necessary for her or her staff to be present with Secret Service?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, as I understand it, the agreement was that they would have people available in a roving capacity, and that we would accept that checkpoint, we would accept the invitation list.

Mr. MCCAUL. But in this case, were they there?

Mr. SULLIVAN. The White House staff was available, it was just a matter of our people either getting on the radio or picking up the phone and contacting them and asking them to come out to help resolve the issue.

Mr. MCCAUL. But you say when Secret Service erred alone, does that mean that Secret Service let these people in without any sort of vetting process, and that the White House had no role in waving them in? Is that what you are telling us?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is what I am telling you, sir.

Mr. MCCAUL. I find it very interesting. I will be very interested to see what the investigation, how that unfolds and what information comes out of that.

I know, looking forward, the White House has admitted error in this memo by the White House Deputy Chief of Staff where he stated that in the future that somebody from the White House absolutely needs to be there present with the Secret Service; is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MCCAUL. So looking forward, and protecting the President of the United States and heads of states across the world, the White House employees, officials will be present with Secret Service as individuals come into the White House.

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAUL. Okay. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cuellar, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Director Sullivan, I appreciate the history of the Secret Service, back since 1865. The mission has evolved from protective to now investigatory, and I appreciate all of that.

Listening to what we have seen here today and from what we have read, my opinion is you have been a good soldier, you are a good soldier, you are taking full responsibility. In my opinion—and this is just my opinion—I think this responsibility should be shared, but again, you are being a good soldier, and I appreciate the work that you and the men and women do that are working for the Secret Service.

Let me ask you this; we have talked about the White House memo that came out that they now will go and have somebody at a checkpoint; is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. CUELLAR. Let's assume that that particular checkpoint that has been in question, if somebody from the White House would have been there—and I understand somebody could have got on the phone, somebody dropped the ball by not getting on the phone and calling—let's assume that somebody from the White House would

have been there at that time. What would have been the procedure to be followed by the Secret Service?

Mr. SULLIVAN. The procedure would have been the same as if our person had called that person on the phone.

Mr. CUELLAR. The person is right next to the Secret Service.

Mr. SULLIVAN. They would have both worked through this issue together.

Mr. CUELLAR. Who would have had the ultimate call on this one?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Again, that is a very difficult thing to answer. It is a joint decision. Ultimately, when it comes to security, we have the ultimate call.

Mr. CUELLAR. Have you ever turned anybody down if the White House asks somebody to come in?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I can't categorically——

Mr. CUELLAR. Can you remember one particular time?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I cannot recall that, no.

Mr. CUELLAR. Okay. Do you have the necessary resources and funds to effectively investigate issues like this? Do you have the personnel and resources available to do all this work?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I believe we do. Again, when it comes to doing our protection, that is our No. 1 priority. We work with the Department, we work with Capitol Hill to ensure that we have the necessary funding. I don't think you are going to talk to any agency head in Washington, DC who is not going to tell you they need more money. But again, we do our best, we prioritize. Working through the Department and working with Capitol Hill, we do everything we can to ensure that we have the necessary funding.

Mr. CUELLAR. You prioritize with whatever resources we give you; is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct.

Mr. CUELLAR. All right. What obstacles currently exist that would have hindered the Secret Service from accomplishing their protective services? Was there anything in particular that night that hindered you?

Mr. SULLIVAN. No, sir.

Mr. CUELLAR. I will go back to my question again; if the White House would have had their persons standing there, what would you have done at that time?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We both would have looked at the list, we both would have determined that they weren't on the list, and I believe we would have worked through it together to determine if in fact that person should have been invited.

Mr. CUELLAR. Again, with all due respect, I think you are being a good soldier. I still feel that the work that your men and women do under the circumstances, I think you all have done a good job. You are being a good soldier by taking full responsibility, but I still think that if somebody would have been there at that time with you, right next, not picking up the phone, I think we would have had a different result at that time. But again, I want to thank you and your men and women for doing a great job.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes, Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Director Sullivan, for being here. I truly appreciate your service and the service of those who serve in your agency.

Listening to my friends, Congressman Cuellar and Congressman McCaul, I am very impressed by your willingness to take responsibility for this incident, but I never, ever expected to see—we always expect the Secret Service to take a bullet for the President. We don't expect the Secret Service to take a bullet for the President's staff. I think we have to have a discussion here about that issue, that clearly there are issues of collaboration and coordination that were not up to the high expectations that I know you have for your agency and that we all have. So it is critical that we hear from the Social Office on this.

But my main question, Director Sullivan, is this: There has been much discussion about the planning meeting and who recommended that no representative from the Social Office be at the initial checkpoints. Given your 26 years of experience, would you have made such a recommendation?

Mr. SULLIVAN. You know, sir, I really don't want to debate whether that was the right decision or the wrong decision. I think the fact is that, regardless of whether it was right or wrong, we agreed to it. When we agreed to it, we took the responsibility for that list, and we took responsibility for allowing that person into the event.

My opinion is, to look back and to say what we should have done or could have done does not take away from the fact that we allowed somebody into the White House who shouldn't have come in. We had a protocol for that particular night based upon our decision that if anybody came who wasn't on the list, that that person should have called for help and we didn't do it.

So I guess we could debate for hours whether or not I would have made that decision or if we made the right decision, but the bottom line is we made a decision and we have to live with it.

Mr. DENT. I appreciate the candor of your answer. Also, I understand, too, that since you would not have made that recommendation, I certainly hope that when the White House Social Office receives recommendations from you about the security of the President of the United States, they would take those recommendation very seriously, like they perhaps should have in this particular instance.

The media has reported that Desiree Rogers, the White House Social Secretary, was listed as a guest for the event and hosting her own table. Do you know if this was in fact the case?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I don't know anything about that, sir.

Mr. DENT. If the Secret Service had a question as to whether or not a very important person was in fact authorized to attend the event, would Ms. Rogers be a logical person to contact in a case like that?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Again, sir, I would not know. I would think that—there are several people working within her office, and I do know for this particular event we had contacts from within her office that we were dealing with. I am not sure in fact if it was her directly or other people who work for her.

Mr. DENT. Again, throughout your time as Director of the Secret Service, were representatives from the White House staff stationed at checkpoints for these types of events in the past, and would such a practice be—well, I guess you have answered it—beneficial in the future?—you said yes. That is your position.

A few other things, too, that I want to run by you. When reviewing the Office of the Inspector General's Secret Service Inaugural security I found an interesting statement by the IG that I would just like to share with you.

In reviewing allegations that individuals without tickets were able to attend the breakfast with Vice President-elect Biden, a Secret Service protectee, the OIG found that the allegations were true, but did not consider them a breach of security.

On page 15 of that report it states, "Because the Secret Service relies on physical screening and monitoring, not invitations, to provide security, there were no security lapses at the Biden breakfast."

Can you explain why the Secret Service considers a ticket a crowd control mechanism and not a security mechanism?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I think it all depends on how those tickets are—and again, I am not sure of the conditions and how those tickets were distributed. Many times tickets are mailed out unilaterally to hundreds of people. I am not exactly sure, sir, how those tickets were distributed. I would be more than happy to look into that and get into it with you, but I guess I am not familiar with that.

Mr. DENT. Okay. You have already stated that essentially a layer of White House security was breached, but there was an agent near the President when he was in the receiving line and met the Salahis, comparable to what one might expect when the President is shaking hands along the rope line; is that fair?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I wouldn't say as close as they are with the rope line, but again, if you watch our men and women on these type of photo lines, people have to pass by an agent on one end, there are other agents on the other end, and we are monitoring these people, we are watching these people. You never see our people watching those we protect, but we are watching the people that are approaching the people we protect.

Mr. DENT. Thank you for your service, and I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes, Mr. Carney.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Sullivan, you understand that this is a hearing that should never have had to take place, and I commend you for your courage to stand in the breach here today. I am just at a loss to understand why the White House didn't send somebody to discuss this as well to give us a better sense; certainly not a profile in courage, certainly for a White House that touts transparency, we would expect somebody to be here.

You know, in a very bizarre way, we owe some sort of a thanks to this pathologically egomaniacal couple that has tried to, not just at the White House, but in many other places, try and do this sort of thing. We owe them this sort of weird thanks for exposing some of these issues.

What is going on? What has happened with the guards who let this happen at the checkpoints, the initial checkpoints? Are they on administrative leave? Can you tell me what is going on there?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir, they are on administrative leave with pay.

Mr. CARNEY. How often does the Secret Service exercise, practice, go through their routines for these sorts of things?

Mr. SULLIVAN. For every event we do that.

Mr. CARNEY. For every event? But do you do it as a matter of course or just your regular training?

Mr. SULLIVAN. For training? I would say that our level of training for these type of events probably isn't where it should be. Over the past year, we have done, I think, a tremendous job in improving our training. We do training out at our Rowley Training Center in Beltsville, Maryland. We look at these type of issues, we put scenarios together for these type of scenarios. We are not where we need to be, but I see us improving every day as far as getting more people out to training.

Uniform Division, we have been authorized at 1,419 for Uniform Division now going back to 2003. We have never been able to get to that number. Right now we are at about 1,350. We are creeping in on that number. I am hoping with more people that we will achieve the 1,419, which will allow us to do more training.

Right now we are working with Congress to get a bill passed which I believe will help with retention and help with recruitment. It is the Uniform Division Modernization Act. It has already been passed through the Senate, and it is going through the House right now, but I believe that will be a big help. But we do put training procedures together for these type of issues.

I am not going to tell you that we are getting it done as much as I would like to, but I do think as we grow the Uniform Division that we are going to see more training.

But I would also tell you this one thing that we learned from this particular event, managerial oversight is very important. I believe that we had the appropriate level of managerial oversight on this night. However, for these type of events we are going to have even more managerial oversight there. We have also come up with a resolution help desk which will be staffed by a commanding officer from our Uniform Division, as well as a senior level person from the White House staff. We have had something comparable to that before, but it was more of a mobile type of thing, where this will be stationary, everybody is going to know where it is.

But again, I go back to the fact that I am not sure that any level of training, any level of funding, any number of people could have prevented what happened the other night. This was just an err in judgment, it was a mistake.

Mr. CARNEY. Well, to that end, then how much discretion does a uniform guard have?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We give all of our officers, all of our agents, we give them a lot of discretion. A lot goes into our hiring. Our people go through, when they initially come on, they go through about 7 months of training. I am very confident in our people. We do give them discretion. There are a lot of things that happen out there that they have to make an on-the-spot decision. They don't have

the luxury of being able to pick up the phone and ask somebody for advice, and we do give them a lot of discretion. In this particular case, we did have time to make the right decision and we just didn't do it.

Mr. CARNEY. I am very concerned by the revelation that Ms. Jackson Lee presented with this e-mail of knowing who was and was not going to be at this event. I think the revelation of that e-mail requires us to do a very thorough investigation into who knew what, when and why, and how they got that information. I mean, that was extremely frightening to me, that apparently Mr. Salahi sent this e-mail, and how he was able to come up with the guest list, and not who was going to be there but who was not going to be there, and apparently why. That is exceptionally troubling. That is a clear security breach that really needs to be understood. It may not be Secret Service's—in this case, it is probably not Secret Service's fault, I don't think it is, but there is a security breach, and people need to understand the protocol of security here. When we err in this country, we have to err on the side of National security.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired.

That information has been entered into the record, and it is our expectation that Director Sullivan will get back with us once he has had an opportunity to investigate the e-mail and the source and what have you.

We have four votes on the floor. The expectation is to recess and reconvene around 12:15. The committee is recessed.

[Recess.]

Chairman THOMPSON. We would like to reconvene the recessed hearing. The next person who is in attendance is Mrs. Miller from Michigan for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Director Sullivan, we certainly appreciate your attendance today and your service to the Nation as well, and many of the questions have already been asked and I know that you have answered many of them, that an investigation is under review and that you cannot answer some of those, and I am appreciative and cognizant of why that is the case.

But I would say just a general observation. In some ways, I think perhaps in a very strange way, this incident may have a silver lining because it does point out systems failures and I am also of the mind that there is shared responsibility here, not only with the Selective Service, but certainly in the case of the White House and their Social Secretary and other administrative officials that perhaps should have been assisting that evening. I know this has already been brought up, but I also would want to make an observation about this e-mail, which I think is almost the most troubling of all of them. The e-mail coming from Tareq Salahi to Michelle Jones basically saying I know for a fact these people are unable to attend the State Dinner. Then they mention Senator Harry Reid and his wife and they mention two other couples. But not only did they mention the individuals not coming, that they are aware they are not going to be coming to the State Dinner, they also say why they are not coming. In the case of Senator Harry Reid, the Sen-

ator majority leader, they have gone home early for Thanksgiving. This other couple, Kuma Gupta and husband, unable to travel to the District of Columbia tomorrow. This other individual, Bob Stevens, top brass from Lockheed Martin, I cannot believe that the Secret Service would be releasing that kind of information. It would seem to me that only an inside source would have access to that kind of information, and I find it extremely troubling. I would ask you to respond to that, Mr. Sullivan, if you could.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Congresswoman. First of all, maybe there is a silver lining here. Again, I am with anybody that wishes this had never occurred. However, we are going to use it to learn and to make our organization even better than it was before.

As far as those e-mails, I am not familiar with that. I hadn't seen that until it was brought up this morning. I understand your concern with that. I don't know where that information came from. I am hopeful during the course of our investigation we can determine where that came from. I would agree with you to have that information out there and not know where it came from, it is troubling.

Mrs. MILLER. It is very troubling and I was certain that would be your answer, that you didn't know about that information or how it got out there because you don't have to comment on this. This is my personal observation that it had to come from, as I said, an inside source, somebody within the wiring diagram of the White House I imagine. The Social Secretary's Office would have had that kind of information. That is why I think it is even more troubling that no one from the White House, particularly the Social Secretary, was able to testify. The White House went on record here, saying specifically staff here don't go to testify in front of Congress, which I thought was an interesting comment, particularly when Speaker Pelosi in the case of Congress trying to get information from the Bush White House said the White House, no matter who it is, cannot violate the Constitution of not being accountable to the Congress, and in fact the Speaker and other Members of the Judiciary, Chairman, et cetera, led the charge to force a number of Bush White House officials to testify and they were held in contempt, former Counsel Harriet Miers and Josh Bolten, et cetera, for not coming to testify in front of the Congress.

So I also find that, Mr. Chairman, very troubling. I want to point that out. I do think this is an administration that ran on the—certainly they talked about transparency and how they would be above and more transparent than any other administration. Right off the bat when we asked to have the Social Secretary to come to testify before a committee, a Congressional committee, in that case they say that it is a separation of powers, which I think is a far, far stretch.

I would also mention the Social Secretary—you mentioned, Director Sullivan, that some of your staff—that as your investigation is proceeding—and we won't go into the details of whom—but that you have put on administrative leave with pay several members of the Selective Service and I am wondering whether or not you are aware if the White House Social Secretary has been put on administrative leave with pay or if any other members from the White House wiring diagram, any administrative staff there have been put on administrative leave with pay?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I know nothing about that, Congresswoman. All I would tell you is that the reason we have taken the action that I have taken is because we did not follow procedure.

Mrs. MILLER. I appreciate that. My time is running out. Let me just ask you. Just to be clear, the Secret Service does not perform any political work on the part of those they protect; is that correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is correct. We are a nonpolitical organization.

Mrs. MILLER. It would seem to me in the case of a State Dinner when you have perhaps political people that have some political affiliation with the President, et cetera, that it would be helpful to have the White House Social Secretary, other appointees of the administration, et cetera, to be available at the various checkpoints. Otherwise it would seem to me there is outsourcing of the political part of the job to the Secret Service. I think that that is—I think that is a mistake.

I would also ask you do you—I appreciate the time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired. The gentlelady from California, Ms. Richardson, for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Sullivan, let me first start off by saying that I appreciate you coming here, for you facing the music as I would say you could have easily hid behind, you know, we are currently doing an investigation, we can't talk about it, but you came to answer the questions here and I respect that, and I want to say thank you.

I also want to say to all of those who serve with you and under you, I think it is important that we remember that you not only do a job, but you also make a commitment that if you have to, you may have to choose to lose your life to protect any of us who happen to be there. So I think it is important we keep it in perspective. I agree that this is severe. I agree that I am concerned. But what I do want to do is to send a message to those who are serving that the appreciation is not there, and that I think this is fixable and that is what I hope that we will do.

My questions are, it is my understanding and it is basically from press reports that I have seen that it was quite busy that night, there may not have been enough equipment systems set up. How many do you normally set up for a dinner such as this of having guests of almost 400 people?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am sorry.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Magnetometers.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Clearly a couple of things happened. The doors opened a little bit late that night. There was a crowd build-up. As I understand it, we had one magnetometer operating that night. I believe that if we had had two we would have been able to clear people through a little bit faster. However, that had nothing to do with what happened at the original checkpoint.

Ms. RICHARDSON. At the checkpoint, where is the magnetometer?

Mr. SULLIVAN. This would have been a great distance away from there. The initial checkpoint, Congresswoman, is at 15th and Alexander Hamilton, which is right adjacent to the Treasury there. Then the magnetometers would be just inside the East Wing.

Ms. RICHARDSON. So had a line built up of people waiting? How long was the line at this particular checkpoint where there was——

Mr. SULLIVAN. We had two different things going on that evening. We had I believe about 35 to 40 vehicles that were going to be dropping people off in the driveway there right by the East Wing, and then we had the rest of the people arriving by foot. I am told that there was a backup of people. I am not exactly sure what the line was. But there was a line there.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Then the White House support staff that was available to you to contact by phone or grab or whatever, how close were they to this particular checkpoint? Were they within 5, 10 feet? Was it someone that they physically had to call? Where were these people?

Mr. SULLIVAN. As I understand it, they were up by the East Wing. So they would have been up at the entry way into the East Wing.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Wouldn't that also be past where these machines were and the lines and everything else was going on?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I am not sure if they were behind the magnetometers or if they were in front of them. I know they were right in the area. Again they were available.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I have got less than 2 minutes. So we have to go fast. You said that you feel that no one else breached the system. How if the officer allowed someone to pass, what makes you think that they just didn't allow some other people to pass?

Mr. SULLIVAN. That is one issue that I wanted us to put a significant amount of review into. So far our review has indicated that no other people were able to get in. I would be more than happy to speak to that with you in a classified setting. I think we can resolve that issue for you.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Did the Salahis come in with other equipment, camera equipment, and so on, to your knowledge?

Mr. SULLIVAN. As far as I know, I think a cell phone. I think that was about the extent of what they had with them.

Ms. RICHARDSON. According to one of reports that I read, not only were their names not on the list, but the only identification that they had was a passport. Would that normally have been something to raise a red flag of, hey, your name is not on the list and you are using a passport for identification given the nature of who all was present?

Mr. SULLIVAN. As I understand it, they showed a passport for identification. I am not sure if any other identification was shown or not.

Ms. RICHARDSON. My question is, by showing a passport, would that have been something normally that maybe the officer would have thought, okay, your name is not on the list and you are showing a passport?

Mr. SULLIVAN. We would accept the passport.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. My last question kind of builds upon Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's question. If a person misrepresents and says that their name is on the list and they document you and they want to seek entry into the building, is that illegal?

Mr. SULLIVAN. You can be charged for lying to a Federal agent.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Are we pursuing any criminal charges in this case?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, ma'am, we do have an on-going investigation. As I mentioned in my statement, we do have an on-going criminal investigation.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Well, I would like to see some sort of clarification I think for the public. It is important that we set what is appropriate standards. Even with the on-going investigation, Chairman Thompson, maybe you can work with him that—I think we need some sort of communication that people aren't just going to be able to go off scot-free. Because I would have a serious wish for that.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Please, just so I am clear, we do have as I mentioned in my statement, we do have an on-going criminal investigation.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Okay. Thank you, sir. Thank you for all of you for what you do.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you very much for your comments.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Clarke, for 5 minutes.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me just add my voice to those who commend you, Director Sullivan, for being so forthright and for taking the heat. I would just like to share with you that I received numerous calls this weekend that was nothing short of outrage from my constituents, and certainly I am outraged as well that these breaches occur, but we are getting beyond that. So my question really has to do now with some other protocols. I know we are going to go into it in a secured environment. But are you familiar with President Viktor Yushchenko of the Ukraine?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. CLARKE. The President of the Ukraine was poisoned at a dinner and he carried—whoever poisoned him utilized a chemical agent known as dioxin. I am just concerned that we have opened up a scenario here that we need to be reassured that we have closed every possible loop of harm or danger to our President. I am sure an agent like that is something that is detected through a magnetometer and I am sure there are other types of agents similar that cannot be detected through normal physical means. So I look forward to that conversation that we will have about how we would address something like that. I also wanted to ask you because you mentioned that you felt that this particular instance was an aberration. It probably was for the White House. But were you aware that the Salahis attended without invitation in September the Congressional Black Caucus dinner, that they entered the premises through the kitchen, and we knew and it was widely publicized that the President and the First Lady was going to be there?

This seems to be a pattern with these people, and I am very concerned because again they mixed and mingled with the crowd in the same way at that event that they did at the State Dinner.

Can you speak to that, Director Sullivan?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I read reports of that and we are looking into that very issue as well.

Ms. CLARKE. Well, I understand there are a whole lot of photographs of this same couple and it is again my understanding and we will probably have to get the facts of it. But them entering through a kitchen facility, that raises again the flag of contamination, the types of harmful elements that can be dispersed in an environment where our President and his guests are present. I want to thank you again for being forthright in your presentation to us today. But I really believe that the level of consciousness that our agents have, that the White House has about safety and security has to be taken to a whole new level. It is our hope that there will not be a scenario of this magnitude ever again and that we will use this as unfortunately a very rough teachable moment to really get things right.

There are a lot of folks who need to question themselves around this particular incident, and I hope that we are questioning ourselves and that we are closing these loopholes so that something like this can never happen again.

I would just close by saying, Mr. Chairman, that I find it ironic that the Salahis were able to get into the White House with such ease when I was basically detained by Secret Service just trying to get into Invesco Stadium to nominate my President. So there seems to be some standards about who is credible in their description of whom they are and where they belong and who does not.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The gentlelady from Arizona, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Sullivan, thank you for taking responsibility and having the courage to show up today to answer our questions. I appreciate that. From my standpoint, the most important question of that evening is was there at any point on the evening of November 24 that the President was in danger?

Mr. SULLIVAN. As I stated earlier, Congresswoman, in my opinion, no, there was not.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Thank you. Now, I also appreciate your willingness to look beyond that incident and really see if there are other vulnerabilities within the Department, and I was a little concerned with the statement to Ms. Richardson regarding the entry at 15th and Alexander Hamilton where only ID is checked and weapons are really not checked at the magnetometers until they are at the East Wing. I just wondered if that is something that you consider a vulnerability. Maybe weapons should be checked before they get that close to the White House. That is my understanding of that procedure, correct?

Mr. SULLIVAN. For a State Dinner, that is our procedure. For other types of events, it will happen further off site. Again, it is inexcusable that these people were let through. They never should have been let through with their name being on that checklist. But depending on what the type of event is will drive where we are going to do our screening.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Thank you. I just want to mention one other thing. I am a former prosecutor and over the years I have observed that we expect superior enforcement from our law enforcement and yet we don't always give them the resources they need. I am not

going to put you on the spot today to ask you if you feel like you have adequate resources, but I want you to know I am sensitive to that. Mr. Chairman, I think that it is also our committee's responsibility and oversight to make sure that the Secret Service has the resources they need to do the superior job that we expect of them. So I thank you again.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make one remark in that I am disappointed that the Salahis did not appear today and I think perhaps it is because they were on the invited guest list. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I think Director Sullivan can affirm the fact that in every instance from a committee perspective, we always ask whether or not he has the resources to do his job. When the budget comes, it is a budget from whatever administration is in charge and his answer in most instances is I can get the job done with the money. Not to put words in your mouth, Director Sullivan.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Chairman, my words are that I work with the Secretary. I work with the Hill to ensure that we get the appropriate funding. I have also said that I don't know of one agency head who doesn't say they need more money. There is a process that I do my best to follow. I work for the Secretary of Homeland Security, and I do my best to work through that process.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I do appreciate your support, sir.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes. The gentleman from Kansas City for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Sullivan, as the head of the Secret Service, you are perhaps the less visible of the most significant agencies in the Federal Government. So, you know, you are Secret Service but you certainly have not been a secret for the last few days, your picture and your position.

Unlike a lot of people, I am very, very happy that this incident occurred. I think it was one of the best things that could have happened to us, because I think it has your agency now, along with others, more engaged in looking at ways in which we can prevent things from occurring. So sometimes something negative can actually be a positive. I think this is one of those instances.

I only have one question, but it may lead to some others. I have become a little concerned over the fact that the Secret Service is engaged in searching for missing and exploited children, and while I think that falls outside of what I have always believed the Secret Service was doing, the Secret Service is now expected to expand its role to include mortgage fraud.

What is leading us to take what has traditionally been the responsibility of the FDIC and the SEC and probably to some degree the IRS and place it with the Secret Service?

Mr. SULLIVAN. To your point, sir—well, first of all, I cannot say that I am happy that this occurred.

Mr. CLEAVER. I am sure you are not.

Mr. SULLIVAN. But I do agree with you that I think there will be some good that comes from this.

As you know, we are a dual mission organization about 144 years old. When we were first founded, we were founded to combat counterfeit currency. We did not pick up protection responsibility until about 50 years after our creation. I believe the dual mission of our organization is very important. We have about 3,500 agents, about 2,200 of those agents are out in the field and they are assigned to investigative responsibility. But they do support our protective mission. It is my belief that what our agents learn as investigators make them that much better in their protection assignments, evaluating people, dealing with people, dealing with various types of situations.

The dual mission, or the investigative mission of our job revolves around financial crimes. The majority of those financial crimes are access to vice or credit card fraud, identity theft and as it relates to financial crimes and cyber, cyber-related issues.

We do work—we do do some work for missing and exploited children and a lot of that is because of the capabilities we have. That is not full-time for every agent. We have a small number of agents who are assigned to that. We believe that our job is to make an impact on the community and we believe that this is a good thing for us to do. It does not take away from our other mission.

Again, I want to be clear, I have said this in writing, I have said this in numerous meetings I have had with our employees, make no doubt, our No. 1 priority is to protect the President. Every employee in our organization realizes that it would be a disaster for this country, for the world if anything were to happen to the President. So nothing will take priority over our protection of the President and the other people we protect.

But I do believe we still have enough resources to work on these other investigative issues that we do, and I do think it makes us a better organization.

Mr. CLEAVER. I agree with everything you said. I guess there is a proposal now to give the Secret Service $20 million more to work in mortgage fraud and I guess I am looking for some consistency. Why not to give the $20 million to the FBI, which also investigates mortgage fraud? It seems to me that we are duplicating services within different agencies. I mean, if the FBI is doing mortgage fraud investigation and you are doing it, and to some degree the SEC, FDIC, Treasury, why can't we have one agency that does one particular service like Protective Service and why do we go into all these other areas? It seems to me that we are diluting our effectiveness if we have four or five different agencies doing the same thing.

Mr. SULLIVAN. No, sir. We have jurisdiction for bank fraud. One of the things we are seeing is that this mortgage fraud is dovetailing into some of the other financial crimes that we are working. I would say, sir, that I am not trying to compete with the FBI when it comes to doing mortgage fraud investigations. They have far more assets and more people dedicated to that than we do. But I still believe that we are making a contribution there.

Mr. CLEAVER. I do, too. Perhaps I am inarticulate in trying to get at where I am going. I mean, we fund the FBI to do mortgage fraud and then we fund two other agencies to do the same thing. Then we fund, if this proposal is responded to by Congress, which it

probably will be, then your agency is doing mortgage fraud. I don't understand why we can't have an agency doing the mortgage fraud. I mean, how do we do it? Do you and the FBI Director say, okay, we are going to do Missouri and you do Kansas or you do Las Vegas and we will do the District of Columbia?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, what I would say to that would be that I do believe there is plenty of work out there for everybody. As I said, protection is our No. 1 priority. If I believed this initiative and us working mortgage fraud was taking away from our ability to take care of our No. 1 priority, I wouldn't do it. Sir, I would be more than happy to bring up our Assistant Director of Investigations who is in charge of this initiative and give you a briefing on that because I do want to make sure that you are comfortable with why we are working it and how that is not having an impact on our other duties.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pascrell, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Sullivan, the highest compliment that I can pay the Secret Service is that every member of your agency that I have met has been the highest quality and professional as you have been. I am very proud of the agency. But like the Congress, we make mistakes, you make mistakes.

Wouldn't you say that what we are talking about today is an institutional problem?

Mr. SULLIVAN. I don't believe it is an institutional problem. I believe it is—as I said before, I think that it is an isolated incident and it is due to—I don't believe that it is due to any systemic problem. I believe it is due just to poor judgment.

Mr. PASCRELL. You know that in the beginning of this year or after the inauguration, a newspaper reported that several security vulnerabilities were observed by some guests at the Inauguration of President-elect Obama. They reported that guests screened at an off-site location stated that their secure buses could have been infiltrated because there was no mechanism to prevent unscreened persons, et cetera, et cetera. A report was given to the agency after that. Can I assume, can everybody on this panel assume that those were addressed and solutions implemented?

Mr. SULLIVAN. First of all, sir, I believe that that IG report did not substantiate those claims. As I read the report—it was reported, as I read it, that we did have appropriate security procedures in that—sir, I will tell you that working with the Inspector General, we flew out to California to interview some of the people who made that report to the paper. We confronted that and we spoke to all the people who made that claim. One thing we had found was that many of the people that were out there working on our behalf were not recognizable to these people. We had agents out there and they weren't in uniform. They were in overcoat, they had on a hat, they had on a scarf. A lot of these people who thought we had no presence out there were mistaken. In fact, we did have people out there.

Now one of the things we did learn is that for a future situation like that, it would be better to change the location of the magnetometers. However—and we have instituted that. However, I will tell you that at no time was there any threat to anybody

being able to get on a bus because we did in fact have our people there, and I believe that was proven by that report.

Mr. PASCRELL. I am interested in not only threats to the President, that is a high priority, but I am interested in the threats to your folks and the people who are at the event. This is not reality TV. Apparently these two people think that this is a continuation of the popular TV programs dealing with reality. After a while, you can't separate TV—reality TV from reality. You know, Americans have a little problem right now. We are trying to distinguish between truth and fiction and myth. What bothers me is that many people are looking at this hearing and thinking it is about some sensational incident when what it is really about is I think a failure that has plagued many institutions. A larger Department has yet to integrate all of its disparate security components. I mean, this is a big Homeland Security Department.

The committee has talked time and time again about the documented problems at the Secret Service, this committee, including low morale among some of the uniformed officers, and it has fallen on deaf years I think because I am sad to say we still have a pre-9/11 mindset. We think we are invincible right up to the point where something happens. The real ugly truth is we don't even think about the Secret Service because we figure they have it all covered. That is until something happens, and then we start asking questions.

So I want to be supportive of you tomorrow as well as today. It just bothers me much that it has now been almost exactly 7 years to the date that we created the Department and we are still reactionary in our approach to threats instead of being proactive, and this incident is a perfect example.

Director Sullivan, you have been the Director of the Secret Service for more than 3½ years I believe.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. PASCRELL. You started out as a special agent in 1983?

Mr. SULLIVAN. 1983. Something.

Mr. PASCRELL. I want to ask you, do you agree that we need real institutional change at Secret Service right now?

Mr. SULLIVAN. By that, how do you define that, sir?

Mr. PASCRELL. Well, do we need changes? Because we are not only talking about this one incident. We are talking about have you had full cooperation in the 3½ years to bring about the changes that you see are important to make your agency more effective and more efficient? Have you received that aid?

We don't know much about Secret Service until we go there and we see all of the great work that you do. I am wondering now that you are here, is there something else we should be doing to help you become a more effective agency?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, I believe that we can always do better and we are always looking to do better.

Mr. PASCRELL. Get me to the real answer.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I will tell you that we are working with the Department. I would say that when we went into the Department of Homeland Security, I think people were asking why are you going into the Department of Homeland Security? They are about transportation, immigration, and borders. I believe that we are in the

right department and we are getting the right support from this Department. Our people have a really challenging job.

We made a mistake here, and it is an unforgivable and indefensible mistake that we have made. But I don't believe that has anything to do with any of the institutional procedures or any of those other issues. I believe this is just a breakdown in judgment. We do some great things every day and if we had hearings for every great thing that we did, there wouldn't be enough hours in the day to hear about what our people are doing. Our people are not looking for a pat on the back. They are not looking for anyone to praise them. We are not looking to bring a lot of attention to ourselves. Our men and women are out there working every single day, 24 hours a day, away from home, traveling. I think our people do a great job, and I could not be more proud of them. I believe this is just a mistake. I do not believe that it is indicative of any institutional problem.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, can I just make one more clarifying point?

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. PASCRELL. I am glad that Mr. Sullivan is before us because I think it helps us to distinguish when someone goes onto the campus at the White House, it is different than going into the White House. I mean, there are questions that you were being asked before, as if somebody was—we have—it is the same thing. You have got to get onto the campus first. In order to get onto the campus, you have got to go through security. In order to get into the White House, you go through another set of securities. I am glad you brought it out and clarified that, because we are not talking about going directly into the White House as soon as you step out of the car.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this hearing. I think it is very timely, and I compliment you for holding it as expeditiously as possible. I thank you, Mr. Director, for appearing.

Mr. Director, as you know, and I am confident that you agree, we are a country of laws, not people, in the sense that we don't allow people to on a case-by-case basis change the law. We consistently follow the law. I would like to compliment you for the job that you have done, the Secret Service has done. I would also like to compliment you on the job that you have done today because you have indicated that there are certain things you cannot talk about while an investigation is pending. I think that you should be complimented for this.

I don't think that people should be prejudged. I think that a thorough investigation should take place before you come to your conclusions, and my assumption is that this is what you are doing. You want a thorough investigation before you document your conclusions. Is this a fair assumption?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. GREEN. All right. Thank you.

Now, let me tell you what I think the American people want. The American people want what they perceive to be as interlopers, the Salahis, they want them treated the same way they would be treated if they showed up without an invitation and somehow managed to get into an affair of this magnitude. That is what they want. But they want you to be fair. They want you to investigate. But if you find that they have breached the law, they want them prosecuted. That is what the American people want.

Now, there is some consternation in the minds of people that emanates from the notion that this is a real significant embarrassment for the Secret Service, and the fear does exist in the minds of some that because of the level and magnitude of the embarrassment there may not be the level of prosecution, lawful prosecution after an investigation that this circumstance would merit if this were John Q. Citizen.

So my question to you, Mr. Director, is this: If the facts show that there has been a breach of the law, that there has been in some ways some deceit that was unlawful, will there be a vigorous prosecution of the Salahis?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Sir, as you stated, it is an embarrassment. However, I am not going to let that embarrassment get in the way of doing the right thing. From the very beginning, I have confronted this issue, I have tried not to—done my best not to duck this issue and stand up for what we did wrong here. If laws were broken, it doesn't matter who broke them. We are going to pursue whatever option we have. As I had mentioned before, we currently have an investigation on-going and we are not going to leave out any option here.

Mr. GREEN. The next thing that I think the American people want is this: They want not only the Salahis probably punished, but if there are other persons who conspired or who worked in some way in a fashion that was antithetical to the law and protocol, they want those persons to be properly punished, too.

To the extent that your investigation reveals that there were others involved in this who may have breached the law, will you assure us that all persons associated with this who may have breached the law in your opinion, after a thorough investigation, that they will all be properly prosecuted?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely.

Mr. GREEN. My final comment is this, sir: I don't think that you should have your head bowed. I think you should maintain the posture of having a top-notch organization that does its job with a great degree of dignity and pride because things happen and it is unfortunate. But out of adversity there is opportunity, and I think you should see this as an opportunity to modify, clarify, and continue to do the outstanding job that the Secret Service is known to do. I compliment you for what you have done and I believe that you will make sure that the proper persons after a thorough investigation, if the law merits, that you will ensure that they will be prosecuted.

I thank you, sir.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, sir. I appreciate your comments. Thank you.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I recognize the Ranking Member.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to introduce into the record the December 2, 2009 memorandum from Jim Messina at the White House, Deputy Chief of Staff to the White House.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

MEMO SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY HON. PETER T. KING

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 2, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: White House Staff

FROM: Jim Messina, White House Deputy Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Review of White House Procedures during the State Dinner on November 24, 2009 and New Guidelines

On Wednesday, November 25, the White House asked the United States Secret Service to conduct a full review of security protocols in place during the State Dinner. After learning of the preliminary findings of the United States Secret Service review, the White House began, over the weekend, to review the procedures that were in place for our staff that night. Below are the findings as well as an important policy change.

I met with the Office of the Social Secretary, which had the lead on the event, as well as other departments, to review their procedures in order to identify what actions were taken and if any changes should occur.

The United States Secret Service announced that the preliminary findings of its internal investigation indicated that established security protocols were not followed at an initial checkpoint. As the Secret Service said last week, agents failed to verify that these two individuals were invited guests before they entered the White House.

We believe White House staff can play a role in streamlining this process as a courtesy to our guests and to assist the Secret Service agents who keep us safe. The President believes that the men and women of the Secret Service put their lives on the line everyday to protect him, his family and many others. He thinks that they do an exceptional job and they have his full confidence. We need to do whatever we can to help them succeed in their mission.

After reviewing our actions, it is clear that the White House did not do everything we could have done to assist the United States Secret Service in ensuring that only invited guests enter the complex. White House staff were walking back and forth outside between the check points helping guests and were available to the Secret Service throughout the evening, but clearly we can do more, and we will do more.

Beginning immediately for all official White House events:

- White House staff will be stationed physically at the check points with the United States Secret Service.
- Guests will be checked off of the list by White House staff and the Secret Service will continue to ensure that all guests have been properly cleared before entering the White House.
- Guests whose names are not on the guest list will be assisted by White House staff present at the check point for appropriate resolution.
- As always, the Secret Service will provide security and remain ultimately responsible for controlling access to the White House complex.

Mr. KING. I believe the Chairman has these also. These are the e-mails that were made available to me by the Salahis' attorneys. I would like them to be made part of the record.

Having said that, I don't want any implication from anyone that I am accepting their version of events. I think this—to complete the

record, we should have the e-mails in the record. I ask unanimous consent on that.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

E-MAILS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY HON. PETER T. KING

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:37 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: FW: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email
Importance: High

Hi Michele ---- thank you!!!
We are really looking forward to it.
I am forwarding this to you just in case as additional back up.
Cheers,
Tareq Salahi
United States Polo Team Captain
INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National Mall June 11 & 12, 2010

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:33 PM
To: 'Rosalind Tyner'; [redacted]
Cc: Tareq OasisWine; [redacted]
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House
Importance: High

Hi Team THANK YOU!!! We are very much looking forward to it!

Full Name:
Social Security Numbers:
Date of Birth:
Citizenship:

Full Name:
Social Security Numbers:
Date of Birth:
Citizenship:

From: Rosalind Tyner [mailto: [redacted]]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:15 PM
To: [redacted]
Cc: Tareq AmericasPoloCup; Tareq OasisWine; [redacted]
Subject: State Dinner at the White House
Importance: High

Paul,

I can't reach Tareq or Michaele Salahi.

Michele S. Jones just called regarding the State Dinner at the White House for Tuesday, November 24,

2009
I need the following information from Tareq and Michaele Salahi **immediately** so she can submit their information before 5:00pm today.

Need from Tareq and Michaele Salahi:
Full Name
Social Security Numbers
Date of Birth
Citizenship

This information is very important to be admitted to the White House for anyone. Please get back to me ASAP. Michele is waiting a response now.

Thank you

GARDNER

"Go Where We Go, Know Who We Know"

Rosalind A. Tyner
Office Manager

Gardner Law Group
10 N. Calvert Street, Suite 735
Baltimore, MD 21202
www.thegardnerlawgroup.com

tel:
fax: [redacted]

rtyner@thegardnerlawgroup.com

Want to always have my latest info?

Want a signature like this?

No virus found in this incoming message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 8.5.425 / Virus Database: 270.14.60/2495 - Release Date: 11/20/09 08:02:00

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:52 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email

Importance: High

Hi Michele.

Thank you for this.

The best way to reach me is on my direct cell:

We are honored to take part of the Arrival Ceremony.

Thank you,
Tareq Salahi

-----Original Message-----
From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:49 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email

Hi Tareq,

Hopefully I can get tickets for the Arrival Ceremony...the State Dinner is completely closed and has been for awhile. As soon as I know, I will contact you. What is the best way to reach you?

Until then,

Michele

Ms. Michele S. Jones
Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense White House Liaison

Department of Defense // Pentagon // [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:37 PM
To: Jones, Michele CIV SD
Subject: FW: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email
Importance: High

Hi Michele ---- thank you!!!

We are really looking forward to it.

I am forwarding this to you just in case as additional back up.

Cheers,

Tareq Salahi

United States Polo Team Captain

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National Mall June 11 & 12, 2010

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To: 'Rosalind Tyner'; [redacted]
Cc: Tareq OasisWine; [redacted]
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House
Importance: High

Hi Team THANK YOU!!! We are very much looking forward to it!

Full Name:

Social Security Numbers:

Date of Birth:

Citizenship:

Full Name:

Social Security Numbers:

Date of Birth:

Citizenship:

From: Rosalind Tyner [mailto: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:15 PM
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Cc: Tareq AmericasPoloCup; Tareq OasisWine; [redacted]
Subject: State Dinner at the White House
Importance: High

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before 5:00pm today.

Need from Tareq and Michaele Salahi:

Full Name

Social Security Numbers

Date of Birth

Citizenship

This information is very important to be admitted to the White House for anyone. Please get back to me

ASAP. Michele is waiting a response now.

Thank you

"Go Where We Go, Know Who We Know"

Rosalind A. Tyner
Office Manager

Gardner Law Group
10 N. Calvert Street, Suite 735
Baltimore, MD 21202
www.thegardnerlawgroup.com
<http://maps.yahoo.com/py/maps.py?Pyt=Tmap&addr=10+N.+Calvert+Street%2C+Suite+735&csz=Baltimore%2C+MD++21202&country=us>

[redacted]

tel:
fax:

[redacted]

Want to always have my latest info?
<https://www.plaxo.com/add_me?u=60130649600&src=client_sig_212_1_banner_join&invite=1<=en>

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:51 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: RE: URGENT: State Dinner / INDIA vs USA World Championships will be hosted in Washington DC 2010

Importance: High

Hi Michele,

By the way -- I know for a fact these persons are unable to attend the state dinner & the reception portion:

1.) Senator Harry Reid & his wife (they have gone home early for Thanksgiving)

2.) Kuma Gupta and husband (unable to travel to DC tomorrow)

3.) Bob Stevens and his wife(Top Brass from Lockheed Martin)

Cheers,
Tareq

-----Original Message-----
From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:45 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: URGENT: State Dinner / INDIA vs USA World Championships will be hosted in Washington DC 2010
Importance: High

Hi Michele,

Thank you.

The USA vs INDIA America's World Cup Championships will be what is recognized as the most significant cultural sporting event between the United States & India strengthening the bilateral relationship we share.

Here is the link to the front page of "The Telegraph" in India today.

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1091123/jsp/frontpage/story_11773787.jsp

Here is a link from the US State Dept/US Embassy in New Delhi discussing how critical these cultural games are to the two nations to strengthen the bi-lateral relationship between the two.

http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/pr070509.html

Thank you,

Tareq Salahi
United States Team Captain

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National

Mall June 11 & 12, 2010 honoring the bi-lateral relationship between India & the United States of America in a historic first

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:45 PM
To: 'Jones, Michele CIV SD'
Subject: URGENT: State Dinner / INDIA vs USA World Championships will be hosted in Washington DC 2010

Importance: High

Hi Michele,

Thank you.

The USA vs INDIA America's World Cup Championships will be what is recognized as the most significant cultural sporting event between the United States & India strengthening the bilateral relationship we share.

Here is the link to the front page of "The Telegraph" in India today.

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Thank you,

Tareq Salahi
United States Team Captain

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National

Mall June 11 & 12, 2010 honoring the bi-lateral relationship between India & the United States of America in a historic first

Cell: [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 4:12 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in em[redacted] & DO[redacted]

Tareq,

I am still hoping that I can get tickets for the Arrival Ceremony tomorrow. They do have your information in the event that extra tickets become available and will notify me immediately.

I still haven't given up, but it doesn't seem likely. I have your number with me in the event that I get a call after hours. I am calling Michaele now also, I have been trying to reach out to everyone I can to get them.

Michele

Ms. Michele S. Jones
Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense White House Liaison

Department of Defense // Pentagon // [redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2009 11:00 AM
To: Jones, Michele CIV SD
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email
Importance: High

Hi Michele,

Hope you had a great weekend.

In prepartions for tomorrow, do you know what time we would need to be there, and which entrance we should go through?

Are you attending tomorrows events?

Thank you very much & Cheers,

Tareq Salahi

United States Polo Team Captain

America's Polo Cup

INDIA vs. USA - World Cup 2010 is proud to be hosted on the DC National

Mall June 11 & 12, 2010

[redacted]

-----Original Message-----
From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [mailto:[redacted]
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2009 4:49 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: RE: State Dinner at the White House / SS# & DOB in email

Hi Tareq,

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2009 8:46 AM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: Arrival Ceremony

Good Morning Tareq,

The arrival ceremony (was scheduled to be outdoors) was cancelled due to inclement weather. They are having a very small one inside the WH very limited space. I am still working on tickets for tonight's dinner.

I will call or email as soon as I get word one way or another.

Michele

Ms. Michele S. Jones
Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense White House Liaison

Department of Defense // Pentagon // [redacted]

No virus found in this incoming message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 8.5.425 / Virus Database: 270.14.60/2495 - Release Date: 11/23/09 19:45:00

Tareq AmericasPoloCup

From: Jones, Michele CIV SD [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2009 1:38 PM
To: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
Subject: Re: THANK YOU!!!

Tareq,

You are most welcome! I here the smile in your email and am delighted that you and Michaele had a wonderful time. :-)

Have an extraordinary Thanksgiving and many blessings to you both!

Much love,

Michele

From: Tareq AmericasPoloCup
To: Jones, Michele CIV SD
Cc: [redacted]
Sent: Wed Nov 25 01:03:26 2009
Subject: THANK YOU!!!

Hi Michele,
You are an Angel!
My cell phone battery died early this evening while we were in DC from our country home, so I just got you message now after driving back out. But obviously it worked out at the end... We ended up going to the gate to check in at 6:30pm to just check, in case it got approved since we didn't know, and our name was indeed on the list! ☺ We are very grateful, and God Bless you.
We just got home, and we had a wonderful evening as you can imagine!
Look forward to seeing you very soon. Say when for dinner – we cant wait to see you and catch up and share memories of a true lifetime.
With Love,
Tareq & Michaele Salahi

No virus found in this incoming message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 8.5.425 / Virus Database: 270.14.81/2524 - Release Date: 11/25/09 07:31:00

Mr. KING. Also, Mr. Chairman, as a courtesy, I would like to advise you that I will be moving to have a subpoena issued for Desiree Rogers to give you the adequate notice required on that. But we feel very strongly on this side. Hopefully it can be bipartisan. We do intend to request a subpoena be issued for Desiree Rogers of the White House staff.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentlelady from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I inquire of the gentleman from New York just a question. Do you accept the fact that this is a law enforcement issue?

Mr. KING. I accept the fact that this is a jointly shared responsibility historically and to get the full picture of what went on we have to——

Ms. JACKSON LEE. But are you representing that the Social Secretary Office is engaged in law enforcement activities?

Mr. KING. I am strongly stating that historically and continually the Social Secretary's Office has worked with the Secret Service at these type of events. If they had been there at this event, this would not have occurred.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. If you would continue to yield, I would suggest to you that any Social Secretary responsibility is ministerial or administrative, that the jurisdiction of this committee addresses the question of law enforcement. The Secret Service is before us and the perpetrators are not, or I don't know that. The Chairman might be calling those names at this point. But in any event, the perpetrators are not here. So the two parties that are directly involved with access, vetting, and perpetration are the ones that need to be before a Homeland Security Committee.

I respect the gentleman's inquiry and request, because obviously he has that privilege to do so. But I would argue vigorously that muddying the waters with a ministerial or administrative actor, if you will, is not going to get the facts that our colleagues have asked for us to get. I, Mr. Chairman, for one, am interested in finding out where the perpetrators are at this point in time, those who I believe intentionally entered into the White House falsely and then, of course, if we have to hear back from Mr. Sullivan in a classified manner, I think the questions of our dear friend from New York will be answered.

I raise a question about the propriety of a subpoena for the Social Secretary, who is in an administrative, ministerial——

Chairman THOMPSON. Just let me——

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Let me just indicate that even the discussion is out of order at this point because we are not able to do it.

Mr. KING. Sir, if I could just respond to the gentlelady, though.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, you made a comment and she responded.

Mr. KING. She raised new issues that I had not raised. It is my strong belief, Mr. Chairman, that all White House employees have a responsibility for the security of the President of the United States. Historically it has been a shared responsibility. For some reason at this dinner, unique among all others in the last 20 years, they were not there. I believe very strongly that especially in view of the fact that the White House staff, the White House Deputy

Chief of Staff has issued an official memorandum saying that the White House operated improperly, that we should inquire as to why they made that decision and what the procedure is going to be in the future because it is an integral part of the security.

Chairman THOMPSON. We differ on that. We will go forward. The Director has already indicated that security at the White House is the responsibility of Secret Service. There is no question about that. Any ancillary individual does not remove the primary responsibility from the Secret Service. That is where we are trying to keep the hearing focused.

But I would like to thank Director Sullivan for his valuable public testimony and the Members for their questions. Given that some of the information that we are seeking, Director Sullivan, is protected or classified, it is my expectation that the committee will move into a closed, Executive Session at the conclusion of a second panel.

Before being dismissed from the public session of this hearing, I would remind Director Sullivan that the Members of the committee may have additional questions for you, and we will ask you to respond expeditiously in writing to those questions. For the Members of the committee, in very short order, we will move into Executive Session and clear the room and be able to ask some of the questions that we are not prepared to ask and get answers from. I ask the Clerk to prepare the witness table for the second panel of witnesses.

Chairman THOMPSON. We would like to reconvene the second panel. On November 30, 2009, the committee invited Tareq and Michaele Salahi to testify at today's hearing. We sent the invitation to secure their first-hand accounts of the Secret Service's protocol on the evening of November 24.

We need this testimony to ascertain the extent of the security breakdowns from the perspective of the individuals who were active participants in those breakdowns. Half of that picture was just provided by Director Sullivan. We still need the other half of the picture from those private citizens. The committee needs to understand all the facts.

For the record, we did engage their attorneys to facilitate this testimony and to communicate that Rule 11 of the House rules grants this committee the authority to subpoena testimony. The Salahis chose to forego participation in today's proceedings with the full knowledge that the committee could compel their testimony through subpoena.

To that end, I am directing staff to prepare subpoenas for the Salahis, and this committee will consider them next week. Once the machinery of the Congressional subpoena authority is activated, if the Salahis continue to rebuff this committee's oversight request, they could be subject to contempts of Congress.

My door remains open. I am hopeful they will be as willing to talk to Congress as they have been to talk to the media, and I move forward with Executive Session for the purpose of talking with Director Sullivan.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, just to preserve the record, I would just ask also to say that since Desiree Washington was also invited at the same time as the Salahis is not here—Desiree Rogers was

invited at the same time that we invited the Salahis. I would make a similar note that they are not here. We are going to proceed with the request for subpoena for Desiree Rogers.

Chairman THOMPSON. The focus of this hearing today in response to Ranking Member King is security. For this reason, the committee invited the Director of the Secret Service and the Salahis, the individuals that breached the security. Pursuant to committee Rule 6, whenever the committee holds an open hearing, Mr. King as a Ranking Member is generally entitled to identify a minority witness to testify at that hearing.

For this hearing, Mr. King identified Desiree Rogers, the First Lady's Social Secretary. An invitation was then issued at Mr. King's request. Ms. Rogers, whose role on the Executive staff does not encompass security, declined to testify today.

On the question of subpoena, I believe there is a clear distinction here between Ms. Rogers and the Salahis. Ms. Rogers is not a central figure in this security matter insomuch as her role on the Executive staff does not encompass security. The Salahis in contrast have critical first-hand knowledge of the security breakdowns at the November 24 State Dinner.

Moreover, the importance of this inquiry necessitates swift action, especially in light of the series of upcoming White House holiday season events. It simply would not be prudent to expend committee resources and time on engaging in a protracted fight with the White House on this matter when the testimony sought is not central to the question at issue.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, if I could be heard on that. I don't believe that you would have sent the letter to the White House requesting Desiree Rogers if you did not believe that she was an appropriate witness. I did make the request and you agreed with it and concurred and sent a personal letter to Ms. Rogers asking for her testimony.

[The information follows:]

LETTER SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY RANKING MEMBER PETER T. KING

BENNIE G. THOMPSON, MISSISSIPPI
CHAIRMAN

PETER T. KING, NEW YORK
RANKING MEMBER

One Hundred Eleventh Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2009

Ms. Desiree Rogers
White House Social Secretary
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Via e-mail

Dear Ms. Rogers:

The House Committee on Homeland Security will hold a hearing entitled "The United States Secret Service and Presidential Protection: Examination of a System Failure" on Thursday, December 3, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. in 311 Cannon House Office Building. I am writing to confirm an invitation for you to testify at this hearing.

Under Committee Rule VI (D), each witness shall submit a written statement of proposed testimony, which must be filed with the Clerk of the Committee in advance of your appearance before the Committee. Please submit a copy of your testimony electronically to the Chief Clerk of the Committee at mike.twinchek@mail.house.gov. In addition, please deliver in advance, or bring with you to the hearing, at least 1 printed copy of your testimony. Oral testimony should not exceed five minutes and should summarize the witness' written remarks. The witness may, in addition, introduce into the record any other supporting documentation, in accordance with the enclosed guidelines.

Under clause 2(k) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, witnesses at hearings may be accompanied by their own counsel to advise them concerning their constitutional rights. Witness counsels are not permitted to sit at the table, unless authorized by the Committee. I reserve the right to place any witness under oath. A witness may obtain a transcript copy of their testimony given in open, public sessions, or in a closed session only when authorized by the Subcommittee/Committee.

The Rules of the Committee, adopted January 2007, are available on its website at http://homeland.house.gov/SiteDocuments/rules111.pdf and the Rules of the House of Representatives are available at the House of Representatives' website at http://www.house.gov/rules/111rules.pdf. Due to the limited space available at the Committee hearing, the Committee authorizes each witness to have not more than two accompanying staff, including any counsel as specified above.

Ms. Rogers
Page 2

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities, including assistive listening systems, interpreters and materials in alternate formats, may be arranged by contacting the Chief Clerk in advance of the hearing (four business days notice is recommended) at the address above or at (202) 225-5082 or TTY (202) 225-1904.

Should you or your staff have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Cherri Branson, Chief Oversight Counsel, or Mr. Todd Levett, at X6-2616 or Michael Twinchek, Chief Clerk at (202) 225-5082.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Chairman

Enclosures:
Testimony Format Requirements

Mr. KING. Also the fact that the Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr. Messina, has sent a memo, an official memo to all the White House staff saying that the Social Secretary's Office will have to be part of security in the future, shows that the White House itself believes that Desiree Rogers is part of the security apparatus of the White House, and I think we are taking a very narrow, limited view of the jurisdiction of our committee if we do not believe that accepting the White House's own version of who is responsible for security if we don't ask them and then follow up by subpoena and demand that they testify on this issue.

Chairman THOMPSON. It is clear that the Ranking Member is correct. Out of personal courtesy, I generally will allow you to call whatever witness you would like to and I have supported you in the past. So it is not precedent-setting in any way. But in this instance, this is an issue of security and security is the responsibility of the Secret Service.

With that, we will move forward with clearing the room for Executive Session.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chairman——

Chairman THOMPSON. We can do it in Executive Session. We can do it in Executive Session.

[Whereupon, at 1:15 p.m., the committee proceeded in Executive Session, and subsequently adjourned the hearing at 1:32 p.m.]

THE UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE AND PRESIDENTIAL PROTECTION: AN EXAMINATION OF A SYSTEM FAILURE

PART II

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Norton, Jackson Lee, Cuellar, Carney, Richardson, Kirkpatrick, Pascrell, Cleaver, Himes, Kilroy, Titus, King, Souder, Lungren, Rogers, McCaul, Dent, Bilirakis, Broun, Miller, Olson, and Austria.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Committee on Homeland Security will come to order. The committee is meeting today for the second day of the hearing, "The United States Secret Service and Presidential Protection: An Examination of a System Failure."

Good morning. I want to thank the witnesses for complying with the subpoena and appearing today. Today marks the third time this committee has met to discuss security breaches at the White House State Dinner. At our first hearing Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan testified. He admitted that the Secret Service bore the sole responsibility for safeguarding the White House grounds and took responsibility for his agency's failure. The Salahis were invited to appear at that hearing but they did not appear, so the committee met again.

At that meeting we voted to issue a subpoena to compel the Salahis to appear. Countless media reports identified them as the couple who attended the White House State Dinner without appearing on the invited guest list. In multiple public appearances the Salahis have said that they were able to enter the White House without triggering the suspicion of Secret Service officers stationed at checkpoints.

This committee, charged with overseeing homeland security, has an important interest in understanding how two ordinary people were able to defeat this security system. Yet despite wide exposure in the media the Salahis steadfastly refused to speak informally or formally with this committee. Although they have decided to appear today, we have been told that they will invoke their Fifth Amendment protections. We respect the Constitution and therefore we must respect their decision.

As a substitute, their lawyer has offered to appear and speak for them. However, those offers are not satisfactory. These lawyers were not at the State Dinner and have no firsthand knowledge of the facts. At best their statements could only be secondhand representations. We believe the Salahis have relevant factual information. We look forward to discovering those facts when the current legal situation resolves itself. But regardless of what fate awaits the Salahis, this committee must continue its oversight of the Secret Service. The safety of the President must be taken seriously.

I look forward to the testimony presented here today. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the full committee, the gentleman from New York, Mr. King, for an opening statement.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you know from the outset, you and I both agree that this was a matter that had to be investigated. It involved the security of the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, and obviously the Prime Minister of India, and it had consequences, potential consequences, for future events at the White House and indeed for the future security of the President.

I thought the first day's hearing where Director Sullivan came to testify was very significant. I give him credit for coming here and telling the Secret Service part of what unfolded. Unfortunately, though, the story is very incomplete when obviously the Salahis here, they are not going to testify, but even more than that I believe the fact that Desiree Rogers, the White House still refuses to provide her as a witness, refuses to give us any information whatsoever on this and continues to stonewall. I respectfully disagree with you, Mr. Chairman, that because the Secret Service accepts its responsibility that therefore implicitly there was no responsibility on the part of the White House.

The fact is it was the White House, under Desiree Rogers, who changed the format. We went back 15, 20 years. We know of no other event at the White House where the Secret Service was told not to be at the gates—I am sorry—where the Secret Service was told that the White House protocol office would not be at the gate with them, would not be there to do a back-up check, and it was done for whatever reason, we don't know. But obviously Desiree Rogers and others were able to prevail upon the Secret Service to change a long-standing policy, a policy which as we see by changing that policy could have had terrible consequences.

I don't know what the White House is trying to hide. I don't know why they won't allow Desiree Rogers to come up here. While I don't see any need for the Salahis to be in Executive Session, as I and others on this side have said, we would be certainly willing to have Desiree Rogers testify in Executive Session if that is what it takes to find out what happened.

Now, we do know that the Deputy White House Chief of Staff, Jim Messina, did send out a memo to the White House reversing the policy which had been started by Desiree Rogers. So again—and also those of us who attended the Christmas event at the White House this year saw that Desiree Rogers and her people were everywhere that night. So obviously something went wrong, and it originated with the White House, not with the Secret Service and not with the Salahis for that matter. But it originated with the

White House. For them not to cooperate with our committee on a matter involving the Secret Service to me is just wrong, and it sets a wrong climate, a wrong tone, and it is inexcusable. There are a number of other instances we can go into in other hearings where I believe also an iron curtain has come down. But certainly they are stonewalling in this instance.

The Salahis are here today. They have said they are not going to testify. I know an offer was made to have, I believe, to have them testify in Executive Session. Mr. Chairman, to be honest with you, I would have objected to going into Executive Session. I don't see anything to hide. There is no reason why—they are not going to have state information or state secrets or confidential methods. I think whatever they do say should be in an open hearing.

I would, however, certainly agree to have the Executive Session with Desiree Rogers or Rahm Emanuel or Jim Messina or anyone the White House wants to send here to explain what they did, why they did it, what was the basis for it and did they ask the Secret Service to import as the security implications of that why after 15 or 20 years of one policy was it suddenly changed for this?

So that to me, Mr. Chairman, is the underlying issue which is not being addressed. Today is going to be a bit of a show. I have no intention of asking any questions. I know we can ask questions and they will take the Fifth Amendment. But to me that just continues the charade that we are as of now still trying to find out what happened. So long as Desiree Rogers is not here we are not trying to find out what happened. We are not making the effort that we as a committee which has oversight over the Secret Service should be attempting to do, oversight over the security for the President of the United States and the Vice President of the United States. We are remiss in our obligations. So long as we refuse to insist that Desiree Rogers be here, so long as the White House continues to stonewall, then we are not doing our job, they are not doing their job, and I believe it has severe implications not just what happened to the White House, but as far as our on-going relationship with the White House. To me it is a breach of trust, it implies a refusal to cooperate, an insistence on controlling all the information, keeping it all to themselves, whether it is on this or other terror-related issues. The fact is this White House I believe has brought down an iron curtain. It is wrong, we should not allow it, we should be the ones defending the prerogatives of our committee in speaking out against what the White House has done here and continues to do.

So we have the Salahis here today. You and I have met with their lawyer. I hope if I ever get in trouble I have him as a lawyer. But the fact is that I see nothing more to be gained here today other than going through the motions of asking some initial questions and them taking the Fifth Amendment. Then I just hope though that this committee and the public doesn't believe that we have effectively completed our investigation because we have not. Until Desiree Rogers comes up here this investigation is open and there are serious questions that remain unanswered, and I put that at the door of the White House.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Other Members of the committee are reminded that under the committee rules opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Hon. Kirkpatrick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ANN KIRKPATRICK

Let me express an opinion since you both are clearly not going to respond to any questions. This Congress has real challenges to take on—getting folks back to work, better protecting Americans against serious threats and leading the international response to the disaster in Haiti. I am personally angry that instead of dealing with these issues, this committee has to waste its time and the people's time to ask you questions you are unwilling to answer and let you distract us from our real work. And all of this because you want to be celebrities. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Mr. and Mrs. Salahi, for the past 2 months, you have disputed the claim that you were not actually invited to the White House and have argued that you actually had an invitation. Yet, the story that we have heard reported by the media indicates that on the day of the event, you were not certain about whether you were an invited guest. Was there any point during the day of November 24, that you were unsure about the status of your invitation to the White House?

- If so, at what time did this occur and what made you question the status of your invitation?
- What was it that brought you to the conclusion that you were invited?

Chairman THOMPSON. I now welcome our witnesses today. As you know, under 18 U.S.C. Section 1621 it is a felony to give perjurious testimony before a Congressional committee. Mr. Tareq and Mrs. Michaele Salahi are private citizens from the Commonwealth of Virginia and attended the White House State Dinner on November 24. Though they were not issued invitations they are here to provide their account of the events of that night.

We would like to welcome both of you to this committee. I now ask that you summarize your joint statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MICHAELE AND TAREQ SALAHI, PRIVATE CITIZENS

Mr. SALAHI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honorable committee. I do have an opening statement for you.

To the honorable Members of the Committee on Homeland Security: Prior to being contacted by anyone from the committee to invite us to speak at your December hearing we asked that our attorneys reach out to the committee, meet with various staff members and provide them with key information to assist the committee in their review of relevant homeland security issues. We understand that our attorneys met with Chairman Thompson's staff, as well as with Representative King and his staff, and provided them with phone records, e-mails, and other relevant documentary evidence. We have continued to provide relevant documentary evidence and be as helpful as we can to the important security concerns you are investigating.

We also understand the committee received our attorneys' letter and our attached declaration indicating that, based on advice of counsel, we intended to assert our constitutional right to remain silent and decline to answer any questions if we were to be subpoenaed to appear before the committee.

We find it unfortunate that the committee nonetheless required us to appear in person to invoke our Fifth Amendment rights under the United States Constitution to remain silent even though

it is against the ethical rules of the D.C. Bar to do so. Indeed, Congressman Waxman chastised this exact conduct in another hearing.

We reiterate that, on advice of counsel, we respectfully invoke our right to remain silent, and we will decline to answer any questions surrounding the circumstances around the events of November 24, 2009.

We appreciate the offer from Representative Thompson's staff to present ourselves for questioning in Executive Session and out of the public spectrum. We understand that to do so would afford us no legal protection and it would not have been fair to accept the offer knowing we would still invoke our right to remain silent.

Our counsel offered last week to the committee an opportunity to provide further information and make a full attorney proffer to the full committee or any interested Members of all relevant information. That offer was declined by Chairman Thompson's staff.

We again offer the opportunity for our counsel to meet with the Members of the committee and assist in this review of important homeland security issues.

Finally, my wife and I say we are strong supporters of the men and women in uniform both here and abroad, we have great respect for the Presidency, the men and women of the United States Secret Service, and they have a tradition of excellence in their missions, and nothing that transpired on November 24 should take away from the extraordinary services the United States Secret Service performs on a daily basis.

Thank you very much.

[The joint statement of Mr. and Mrs. Salahi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAELE AND TAREQ SALAHI

JANUARY 20, 2010

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We again offer the opportunity for our counsel to meet with the Members of the committee and assist in this review of important homeland security issues.

Finally, we are strong supporters of the men and women in uniform, both here and abroad. The men and women of the United States Secret Service have a tradition of excellence in both their investigative and protective missions and nothing that transpired on November 24 should take away from the extraordinary service the United States Secret Service performs on a daily basis.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much for your testimony. I remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the panel. I will now recognize myself for the first set of questions. This is to either one of you, Mr. or Mrs. Salahi.

Did you attend the White House State Dinner held on November 24, 2009, as part of a reality TV stunt?

Mr. SALAHI. Mr. Chairman, I am under a nondisclosure agreement and should not discuss matters related to the television matter.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, that is not the answer. Let me give you another chance to——

Mr. SALAHI. Mr. Chairman, then on advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Chairman THOMPSON. You have that absolute right. Did you receive an invitation in the mail to attend the White House State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. Mr. Chairman, on advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Chairman THOMPSON. Can you describe for the committee your interaction with the Secret Service officer at each checkpoint and how you walked from the street to the White House?

Mr. SALAHI. Mr. Chairman, on advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Chairman THOMPSON. Were you on the Secret Service officer's security list at the first checkpoint to enter the White House grounds?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Chairman THOMPSON. Did the officer at the first checkpoint verify your names on the security list?

Mr. SALAHI. Mr. Chairman, on advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. What form of identification did you give the Secret Service officer for verification?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Did the officer ask you probing questions about your biographical information, such as your full name, Social Security numbers, date of birth, and citizenship?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. It is clear that you are absolutely within your right to assert your constitutional rights to do so.

I will now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York, the Ranking Member.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, I see no need to ask any further questions. I will ask if any Members on my side want to take advantage of my time.

I yield to the gentleman from Indiana.

Mr. SOUDER. I would just like to echo our Ranking Member's earlier comments. I have questions about who created the list, how do you change the list, why weren't they on the list, who deals with that. I can't ask the questions of the people who made the decisions. I think today's procedure is a charade.

Mr. KING. Will the gentleman yield back?

Mr. SOUDER. Yes.

Mr. KING. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. LUNGREN. Mr. Chairman, I perfectly understand your statement that our witnesses are well within their rights to cite their constitutional rights, and that is true. In normal circumstances I would object to us even calling them here to have them actually do it personally. But this is an unusual circumstance in which we are talking about the security of the President of the United States. As he said just last week, we are in a war. Because we are in a war we have to take our responsibilities seriously. That includes the White House, that includes the Secret Service, and that includes everybody in the White House, including the Social Secretary. It is almost as if we have given the Social Secretary greater protection than key advisers to the President on policy matters.

But I agree with your decision to call them forward because of the unique circumstances that we are talking about. This goes to the question of protecting the President of the United States. With all due respect to our witnesses you have the very right that you asserted here. But to have engaged in conduct which undercuts the seriousness of our effort to protect our President and protect vital elements of this Government as some sort of reality show or personal peek, or whatever you did, is an extraordinary affront to the seriousness of the issues that are before us today.

You say in your last statement that you have great respect for the men and women of the United States Secret Service. You did not show that. You say that you are strong supporters of men and women in uniform, both here and abroad. They put their lives on the line every single day to protect us against any threat to this Nation, and for people to make a joke of it, to think it is not serious, is an affront to those individuals.

So you have your right to claim protection under the Constitution of the United States, but you have shown effrontery here to take the name of men and women in uniform who are protecting this Nation and suggest that somehow what you do provides support for them.

I was going to sit here and remain silent until I heard that last paragraph of your statement. But to suggest that somehow what you are doing shows support for our men and women is an abomination. The Constitution protects fools. The Constitution protects stupidity. The Constitution protects errant thought. Thank God it does.

Thank you. I will yield back.

Mr. KING. Anybody else request time? The gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Ranking Member for yielding. I sat here a few weeks ago, I guess it was in December, when I saw Director Sullivan stand here and basically accept responsibility for everything that happened on that evening. At the time I said I expect the Secret Service to take a bullet for the President, I don't expect the Secret Service to take a bullet for the President's staff. I concur with everything that Mr. Lungren just said, and I think it is unfortunate that we are here today under these circumstances and that a good man like Director Sullivan, whose agency made a mistake, you know has had to suffer so much public humiliation and embarrassment over this event, and that is all because of your actions on that day. I wasn't going to say anything either, but the fact that Director Sullivan had to take all that grief from us and from so much of the public I think is unfortunate, and I hold you responsible for it, and I yield back.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentlelady from the District of Columbia, Ms. Norton, for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for going forward with your constitutional duty during an investigation of homeland security. I do want to say that there are two constitutional provisions involved in this hearing. One is the constitutional provision known as separation of powers, where the President does not and endlessly did not, has not endlessly on most occasions had his personal staff come to the Congress. Yet there is yet another provision, one that I respect profoundly. That is the Fifth Amendment, a precious Bill of Rights amendment.

I do want to say, Mr. Chairman, that no one has a right to invoke the Fifth Amendment by proxy through their lawyer or by press release or in secret. So what you did, Mr. Chairman, you were duty-bound to do. This couple is being investigated by Federal authorities on criminal counts, including the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. Therefore, they have every right to invoke their Fifth Amendment rights not to incriminate themselves. I want to respect that right and I ask no questions of them.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Souder, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. No questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I might add my appreciation as well for your upholding your duty as the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee. Over the last couple of months we can see that the focus of the Nation, beyond personal economic concerns, is to ensure the security of the homeland. Over the last couple of months this committee and the crisis of homeland security has been on the people's mind. From the incident that involved, tragically, a military captain in Fort Hood, Texas to the incident that occurred on Christmas Day, we know that the security of a homeland is not a joke.

To the Salahis let me say in all respect the security of the President of the United States is not a joke. Your actions or alleged actions on that fateful night made a mockery of this country, a mockery of our security, a mockery of your commitment to this Nation, and a mockery to any representation that you are patriots or love this country. I am incensed, not of your personal dignity and humanity, for I will never challenge that, but for individuals to be so reckless as to believe they can enter onto Federal facilities, property of the United States, hosting a dignitary from a foreign nation of whom we owe an obligation to secure, the Vice President of the United States, and the President of the United States with reckless disregard for the perception and the reality of what would be seen as a breach in security for terrorists of all walks of life, to be able to make the assessment that I can do it, too. I am saddened, I am disappointed, and I am outraged, and I would ask you to check your patriotism and to find out why you had to do something of that level.

With that in mind, I do respect your constitutional rights. I respect them because I respect this Nation. I also respect the rights and responsibilities of this Congress and this committee. So sadly I will ask the question that both of you can answer. You had a duty to inform the Secret Service officer that you were not an officially invited guest. You dressed the part with the intent of attending a State Dinner, you did not receive an official invite, your backgrounds were not checked by the Secret Service, your names did not appear on the guest list and your request for an invitation from Michelle Jones was denied and rebuffed. Can you tell me what more did you need in order to understand that you were not invited?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. My understanding is that after being told that you would not receive an official invite you began plotting to get into the State Dinner, you began to discuss a scheme which included dressing up and pretending to be guests. This is not the first time, as I understand it, that you can be considered party crashers. This time you provided materially false information to a Government agent, Secret Service officer, who bore the responsibility of protecting the safety of the President of the United States and his guests. I respect the fact that you respect the Secret Service. My question: You did this to appease your own goals. Did you falsely provide information to Secret Service agents who were asking your credentials as you entered the White House?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You knowingly misrepresented your status as invited guests. In fact you tricked the Secret Service officer into believing you were a guest of the President. Gaining access to the event under false pretenses makes you trespassers, as it was in furtherance of your initial crime of giving false statements and/or tricking a Government agent. Your behavior was wanton and egregious. After scheming your way into the event you shamelessly proceeded to socialize with the President, Vice President, and various invited guests, then brazenly posted photographs of your poor and

ill-conceived behavior on your Facebook page for the entire world to see. Your actions could have seriously endangered the safety and the life of the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, and the visiting dignitary.

My question to you is did you have any consideration for the breach of security that you were engaged in at that time?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your answer.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. To my colleagues, as I respect their rights, let me offer to say that there are two criminal actions under 18 U.S.C., one, the intentional misrepresentation to a Federal agent which under the present allegation suggests occurred, and the intentional trespass on Federal real property, which apparently it seems to be.

To the Salahis we are pleased that you are here today. I don't believe that it is a mockery or that it is without purpose. I am saddened that we have to say to the American public that there are those who are not concerned about the security of the homeland.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alabama for 5 minutes, Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to yield my time to the gentleman from Texas, Mr. McCaul.

Mr. MCCAUL. I thank the gentleman from Alabama.

This was the first White House State Dinner of this administration with a dignitary, head of state from India, who obviously is a target, neighboring to Pakistan where the terrorists are, with the President of the United States who we know is a target as well. This is a very serious matter in your advancing this reality TV show agenda and exposing at the same time a vulnerability in our security and in the White House. While I appreciate the two of you showing up here today and exercising your constitutional rights, I think it is also important that we examine the White House's role in this and what role the Social Secretary played or didn't play in allowing you access into the White House to get right up to the President of the United States. Now, in this case obviously nothing happened, but we were lucky. What if we are not so lucky next time? That is how serious this is.

I want to ask you a couple of questions. Were you invited to the White House to the State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Mr. MCCAUL. Did you submit date of birth and Social Security numbers in advance to your attending the White House dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Mr. MCCAUL. Were you waved in by an official from the White House to get into this State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Mr. MCCAUL. You have every right to do that, but I will echo the sentiments of my colleague from California that this is a disgrace to the Secret Service. We are in a time of war. You say you support the troops, but they are in harm's way protecting us here at home, and we are going to continue to investigate this matter.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes, Mr. Carney.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This has become a real distracting sideshow in the history of this country. I suppose it is what happens when we need to pay closer attention to things and not focus so much on the egomaniacal among us, and that is what is going on now.

I think there are three sides to this story. Mr. Sullivan came and very admirably addressed his side. This is another side with no answers, and we are not going to get any answers obviously. But I agree, I agree with Mr. King and my Republican colleagues that I think Desiree Rogers or someone from the White House needs to come and tell the third side of the story. In so doing, then we can truly begin to understand what happened and to protect the President. I want to extend my invitation as the Chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee to the White House to come and have a chat with us. I think that that makes a lot of sense.

Now, as far as the Salahis go, time is the only thing really that we have of value here, and I can't believe how much you are wasting of ours and the taxpayers' dollars right now. It is incredible. You know I am not going to ask a question because you are not going to give me an answer anyway. But if you truly are patriotic, if you truly are Americans, if you truly love this country, think about your actions. That is all I will tell you.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas again, or do you want to pass on your time, Mr. McCaul?

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes, Mr. Chairman, I will pass.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Dent, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DENT. I said most of what I wanted to say, Mr. Chairman, but I am just going to be really brief. You know there are very real threats to this Nation, and we are expending an extraordinary amount of resources to mitigate those threats. We know about the Christmas Day attack and there are other attempts that have occurred in this country that we are all too familiar with. The fact that we are expending so much of our time and our valuable resources dealing with this shameful stunt I think is truly unfortunate. I do want to restate one thing. Again, Director Sullivan, it just still pains me to see him sitting here accepting responsibility for all of this, and that there are a lot of very good people in the Secret Service, and a mistake was made. The fact that their reputations may be besmirched because of this event I think is particularly troubling, career people trying to do their best to keep this Nation safe, and here we are today to deal with this issue in this manner.

So I have no questions, Mr. Chairman, because obviously it would be a fruitless effort to ask any questions. We will not get any responses. But I too want to restate what Mr. King has said, that we ought to have the White House Social Office here to explain their role in this situation. We need to know what they did and why they did what they did and again, to perhaps take some of the

heat off the Secret Service and Director Sullivan, who so admirably stood up here and accepted responsibility for the entire event.

So with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Richardson.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We haven't heard anything from Mrs. Salahi, so my questions will be directed to you. Have you ever attended an event at the White House?

Mrs. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Were you advised of the process to attend an event at the White House, one of which is needing an approval to attend?

Mrs. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Did you receive the information confirming your approval to attend the event and, if so, from whom?

Mrs. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Have you not reserved your right and spoken to any media outlets about your attendance at the White House?

Mrs. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. RICHARDSON. When you were advised at the gate that your name was not on the list, why did you continue to attempt to enter when you knew you did not have final confirmation?

Mrs. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Finally, when the criminal process is evaluated and concluded, will you return to this committee and testify and tell us exactly how you entered the White House?

Mrs. SALAHI. Yes.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Olson for 5 minutes.

Mr. OLSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief. I don't want to—I won't ask any questions because obviously we know what the answer is going to be. But I want to follow up on some of the points my colleagues made.

I just want to tell you and make sure you realize what an incredible breach of security and what an incredible position you put our country in by crashing that State Dinner. Terrorists are out there and they are trying to hurt us. We saw that on Christmas Day. They are watching. They are looking. They are looking for vulnerabilities in our security system, and you presented them with a textbook of how to get access to the President, the Vice President, the foreign minister, the Prime Minister of India. Again I can't tell you how much you have hurt our country and what you have done to expose us to the dangers again that we are facing from the terrorists. They are still out there. We saw that in my home State at Fort Hood, we saw that on Christmas Day. Again by your actions you have given a roadmap and shown them here are some vulnerabilities that possibly you can exploit and do incredible damage to our country.

That is all I have to say about this incident, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to break through the protocol here and the niceties and get at the basic issue if I may. Who would have thought that two normal-looking people, take a look at them today, dressed to the T, these beautiful people would have broken through in some manner, shape, or form to be alongside the President of the United States?

I want to mention, Mr. Chairman, to all the proponents of racial and ethnic profiling that this case involving these two individuals, the Salahis, just goes to show that while you are looking for a certain kind of person fitting a certain profile you are going to miss the real targets. Behavioral profiling is in order, and these two people are living proof. So I don't respect your right to take the Fifth Amendment, not at all. Because it didn't have to be the President of the United States, it could have been somebody else. It could have been someone not as important as the President of the United States. You broke protocol.

Let me ask you a question, Mr. Salahi. Did you wear a tuxedo that that night? Are you going to take the Fifth on that?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to——

Mr. PASCRELL. Let me ask you a question. Were you there?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel——

Mr. PASCRELL. Are you here today, Mr. Salahi? Are you here right now?

You got to get an answer from your attorney on that? Your attorney bobbed his head up and down when my good friend from Pennsylvania was discussing the possibilities that someone from the White House should be here also testifying. He was going like this and this. You can do it all you want. You are not going to take the heat off your clients. No one is going to take the fall for them. So there may have been something wrong going on and maybe the White House made a mistake, but they are not here.

[Outburst from audience.]

Mr. PASCRELL. No, I don't want any comment. I plead the Fifth on your question.

Chairman THOMPSON. Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. I will continue. Mr. or Mrs. Salahi, I believe the entire committee does—we could move on from the frivolous fake celebrity nature of this issue and concentrate on the security breach itself which every American should rightfully be concerned about. Because if you were two folks sitting here from Paterson, New Jersey, long-robed with those hats on top of your head I wonder if you would have gotten through as you swooshed through in front of the camera. Your presence is required specifically so you could answer the events of that night—to the events of that night. This committee gave you every opportunity to speak behind closed doors, did it not, Mr. Salahi? Did it not?

Mr. SALAHI. You did, but you didn't afford us any legal protection. You wanted us to speak versus our attorneys.

Mr. PASCRELL. So we did give you that opportunity?

Mr. SALAHI. Without any legal protection.

Mr. PASCRELL. Yet you continue to evade every opportunity to present your side of the story. The fact that you now appear here and are unwilling to speak to any details, and I associate myself with the words of Mr. Lungren, who put it very plainly and simple and to the point, the fact of the matter is that you used the Secret Service to say so many nice things about them and what you have done is defied the will of authority. This whole episode has been a stunt and a charade upon your part to gain attention and notoriety so desperately you seek apparently. I want to turn my attention away from you because I don't believe that you have anything to offer this committee, and it is my hope that they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The issue we should be concentrating on is the failures of insecurity. We do not know—we now know that there was at least one other uninvited guest who made it into the White House that night. There was another person. A fact that was never disclosed by the Secret Service during our first hearing. That individual was Carlos Allen.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired. For the record, Mr. Pascrell, let me indicate that we have sent a request to Director Sullivan to provide us any information about the third person and we anticipate receiving that information very shortly. So once we get it we will share it with the Members of the committee.

Somehow we are having technical problems. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Austria for 5 minutes.

Mr. AUSTRIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me just say I will keep my remarks very brief as well because I concur with what much has been said within this committee. I think this has been a big distraction of this Homeland Security Committee as we try to focus on homeland security issues that are important to this Nation.

Let me just also reemphasize what has been said on this side of the aisle. While the U.S. Secret Service has the responsibility to vet and physically screen authorized individuals, its officers have no role in determining whether someone has been inappropriately excluded from or included on that guest list. I think if we really want to get to the bottom of what has been raised of questions we really need to get some cooperation from the White House. I think the fact that the White House Social Secretary, Desiree Rogers, declined her invitation to testify to this committee I think leaves that question out there unanswered as to how we can correct this problem. We need to pursue that, and that issue I don't think is going to go away. Obviously with the answers that we are getting today from our witnesses being here today I don't think we are going to get any additional information.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I don't know if any of our Members want to use any of my time, they are welcome to do that, I would be glad to yield to them. If not, I will yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I would like to just remind the Members that when Mr. Sullivan was here he indicated that his office, the Secret Service, had sole responsibility for the

vetting and the security of whatever names that were provided to them and that the witnesses here, their name was not on the list according to Director Sullivan's testimony.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Himes.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. and Mrs. Salahi, I have been deeply ambivalent about these proceedings. I almost voted against the subpoena that brought you here today, and I certainly would not have asked a question but for your, I think, ill-advised appeal to patriotism. We have now spent 45 minutes, and I think I speak for my colleagues on both sides, that would have been better devoted to thinking about the unemployment of this country or the threats that we face around the world. But you chose to appeal to patriotism, and so I want to talk for a second about the Fifth Amendment right that you assert here today which your appeal to patriotism would indicate you put some value on.

You have the absolute right to do so. But let's be very clear, you have no obligation to do so. You choose to assert your rights under the United States Constitution just as Director Sullivan when he sat in that seat made a choice. He could have engaged in the age-old celebrated Washington game of finger-pointing and the blame game of CYA, but he chose to be a man of honor and to take responsibility and to take some professional risk to put himself in professional jeopardy. I understand what you are doing, and I celebrate your right to do it. But let's be very clear about the choice you are making. You are making a choice to limit your legal jeopardy, which your attorney has rightly advised you to do, but you make a choice to take that route rather than to help us understand what for all its silliness, for all its absurdity was a very real threat to the National security of the United States. You could choose not to assert your rights against self-incrimination or you could choose to. Let us be very clear about the choice you are making. You are choosing to legal your—you are choosing to limit your legal jeopardy under a right that we all celebrate and we all appreciate as opposed to assist in the open and fair airing of some things that could conceivably save the life of the President of the United States.

So my question has actually nothing to do with the events of November 24, and I give you ample time to consult with your attorney in answering this question. Given the nature of the choice that you are making today, would you not reconsider and consider airing the information that you have to assist this Nation in the protection of the President of the United States rather than asserting your rights under the United States Constitution?

Mr. SALAHI. Well, let me be clear, through our counsel we are ready to tell you all the details, but through only our counsel. But if you want to know the details they are ready to tell you, they are ready. But it is not going to come from our voice, it is going to come from our counsel, but they are ready to tell you.

Mr. HIMES. Mrs. Salahi, would you at this point in time reconsider your choice to testify personally or will you continue to assert your rights under the Constitution?

Mrs. SALAHI. I will do under the advice of whatever counsel suggests for me.

Mr. HIMES. Thank you. I have no further questions. I yield back my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Broun.

Mr. BROUN. Mr. Chairman, it is right for us to look into this security breach. The protection of the leaders of this country is absolutely critical for the security that they must have. It is also imperative that this committee look into the security over all of this Nation, the Salahis or undocumented attendees at a Christmas party—or a State Dinner. That is a tremendous breach of security that personally I believe the process was put in place by the White House and Desiree Rogers to make an environment where the Salahis could take an advantage. They just took advantage of that process that Ms. Rogers put in place and the White House put in place. This committee voted pretty much on partisan lines to protect Ms. Rogers, and I find that detestable. I want to associate myself with Mr. King and what he said and Mr. Lungren in what he said. But the Salahis just took advantage of an environment that the White House themselves in my opinion created. There were undocumented attendees. We have a lot of undocumented attendees in this country that are also a security risk. We are not dealing with illegal aliens in this country. We must because it is of vital security interest to this country.

So I just appeal to my colleagues on the Democratic side. Let's stop protecting Ms. Rogers, let's stop protecting these illegal aliens in this country, let's be serious about National security and go forward in a manner that not only will protect the President and all the leaders of this country but will protect this Nation against attacks. Not just attacks by going to a State Dinner, which is a security breach and a very egregious one, but we have many, many security breaches at our borders every day that we must look into, we must attend to, because the security of our Nation depends upon it.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Mr. Cleaver for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I simply would like to associate myself with the earlier comments of the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Pascrell, with regard to racial and ethnic profiling, and I have no questions of these great Americans.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Lungren.

Mr. LUNGREN. No questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair recognizes Ms. Titus for 5 minutes.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that the Salahis were out in my district this past week as celebrity hosts at the PURE Nightclub at Caesar's Palace. While you were there having fun, I hope, we like for a lot of people to come to Las Vegas, you were asked by the press what really happened and you responded dig deeper. Yet while this committee is trying to dig deeper in the hopes of strengthening our security, you have chosen not to assist us. I think that is very unfortunate. You have a real opportunity to help us with important oversight of our Secret Service

and our ability to secure our homeland and yet you have chosen not to. Your audacious activities have exposed a real flaw in the security systems of this country, and I wish your legal counsel had said yes, let's try to help fix these problems and make it better.

So I will make one more attempt, even though apparently you are not going to answer. I would just ask you are you at all concerned that your actions might inspire other people, either friendly or celebrity-seekers or terrorists, to try and crash other White House events?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. TITUS. Well, then I will try one more. Did you have a good time in Las Vegas and did you notice at the PURE people had to stand in line and pay to get in and they don't allow party crashers there?

Mr. SALAHI. Pursuant to Section 1 of your own subpoena, I am only compelled to respond to questions reflecting the circumstances surrounding the White House State Dinner on November 24. Based on the fact that the question doesn't have to do with the circumstances surrounding these events, I respectfully deadline to answer your question.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I won't ask any questions because we are not going to get any answers. But I would like to associate myself with the comments made by Ranking Member King and Subcommittee Chairman Carney about the need to invite the White House to testify about this serious security breach, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair now recognizes Mrs. Kirkpatrick for 5 minutes.

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Mr. and Mrs. Salahi, I am disappointed that you did not appear before us when you were invited December 3. The importance of that hearing was for us to understand what happened so that we could quickly act to correct that to protect our President. Appearing today almost 2 months after the incident is just not acceptable.

As we saw on Christmas Day, we have a very real threat to our citizens, to this Nation, to our President, and it is a responsibility of each one of us as a citizen to be vigilant and to report any breaches that we see in our security system that could cause people to come in harm's way.

As a former prosecutor I respect your right to assert your Fifth Amendment rights. I do have questions that I hope—I wish could have been answered today, but I will submit them to the committee for the record.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan, Mrs. Miller, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was listening to my esteemed colleague from New Jersey, Mr. Pascrell, when he said look at these beautiful people. They may be beautiful on the outside, but as we all went through the Martin Luther King

Day here recently I remember, not to paraphrase, but when he said people will be judged by the context of their character, and that is the way that the Salahis I think will be judged in what they are doing here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have the great honor and privilege to represent a district in southeast Michigan, arguably the epicenter, ground zero, of the economic challenges facing our Nation. We have about 15, in the 15th percentile right now of unemployment in our State. On top of all of the heartbreak that is happening in the Great Lakes State, my beautiful, beautiful State, then on Christmas Day we had this terrorist attempt over the skies of Detroit where the terrorists now see the battleground in an asymmetrical way. On that day the battleground was in seat 19A of that Northwest flight over the skies of Detroit. I knew people that were on that flight, and certainly if that flight would have exploded over my area there I would have spent my time going to an awful lot of funerals, I am sure.

So it is almost surreal for me to be sitting here today looking at people who wanted to get on some TV show, called the Desperate Housewives of Washington, DC or something, in the light of the kinds of challenges that we face and that I wish this Congress was taking up. With that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to yield the balance of my time to Mr. Souder.

Mr. SOUDER. I thank my friend from Michigan. Part of my concern with this process—and we have held hearings while I have been in Congress over in Government Reform and Oversight where people have taken the Fifth—is that we usually don't isolate one individual or two individuals in the course of a case when there is an on-going case. We either get them up together and let them do it together, or we would have done at the first hearing, or would have waited until we had some more information. My understanding is there is a third person. The Chairman referred to that third person.

But my question is where is Bravo? Where is the company that did the contract that apparently may have filmed them getting their hair done, getting their clothes ready and been a cooperative part of this process? We have talked to NBC. Why isn't NBC here today with any video that they have? Why aren't other individuals who may have been implicated in this—whether they take the Fifth or not, and some of them probably wouldn't get Fifth Amendment protection. Why are we just having one couple that clearly is the firestorm center, clearly put our Nation and everything we have heard today potentially at risk by exposing things, by showing weaknesses, and behaved unpatriotically and in spite of themselves? I don't disagree with that, but the question is why, if we are after truth, why didn't we do this all together and are we not only having the third person, is Bravo coming, and is NBC coming and do we have other potential witnesses as well?

If this was filmed in advance and it was cooperative in the media to do a scam on the United States Government, we need to do more than just pick two individuals who were participants. Mr. Chairman, are we going after any of them, subpoenaing them, having an additional hearing with any of them?

Chairman THOMPSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SOUDER. I yield.

Chairman THOMPSON. Just for the record, Majority and Minority staff have already met with Bravo, NBC, all those. Everyone has indicated that they would be perfectly willing to provide us any and all tapes, copies of documents relative to this investigation.

Mr. SOUDER. Are we planning to show the tape or any of that, or have a discussion with other Members? Because this has been interesting, them taking the Fifth and showing the other individuals that they don't want to share. But obviously we have information that would be of interest to the public as much or more than taking the Fifth. Are we going to do this in public or——

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, I think the question is relative to the two witnesses here today, they are the persons who perpetrated the breach. The other individuals, NBC, Bravo, others, have provided tapes and other information. We will be more than happy from a committee perspective to make the request that they provide it, and any Member of the committee, at their leisure or whatever, can review those tapes.

Mr. SOUDER. Okay. Reclaiming my time. I don't mind them being embarrassed, even though I have concerns about the hearing. The question is that many of the questions that were asked today apparently we already know. If we have the tape of what they looked like, where they went by, what they showed, it seems to me it would have been relevant today to share some of that information in this hearing, since apparently Members were asking questions that we may already have information about.

Chairman THOMPSON. You misunderstood me. We don't have the tapes. They have been offered. Minority and Majority staff have met with all those studios and they have offered them. I will be more than happy to request them. As you know, the Salahis have been very up-front in their interviews on the different networks, and so it is no secret what has been said.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Chairman, may I ask you a question?

Chairman THOMPSON. Sure.

Mr. SOUDER. Why, if they offered the tapes, and some of the answers to questions we were asking today are on the tape, why didn't we look at the tape before we asked them? I am baffled right now. In other words, some of the questions, you know, how did you get by, what did you show and so on, those are presumably on the tapes. Why wouldn't we have asked to look at the tapes before we did the hearing?

Chairman THOMPSON. The information and questions we asked are not on the tape, so clearly we will have to have the witnesses for that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, would you yield?

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired. Ms. Kilroy for 5 minutes.

Ms. KILROY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I share many of the sentiments that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have stated here this morning with respect to these witnesses. But I would like to ask these witnesses a few questions, despite their apparent unwillingness to cooperate with this body: Mr. and Mrs. Salahi, did you have a public relations agent with respect to any reality or unscripted TV show that you have been involved with in any way?

Mr. SALAHI. Ma'am, pursuant to section 1 of your own subpoena, I am only compelled to respond to questions reflecting the circumstances surrounding the White House State Dinner on November 24. Based on the fact that the question is not relevant to the circumstances surrounding those events, I respectfully decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Did you have a public relations agent with respect to any of the actions regarding the preparation, your attendance, your attempt to get a ticket to the November 24, 2009 State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. You think that having a public relations agent requires you to invoke the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Did you have a talent agent with respect to your attempt to get a ticket and your appearance at the State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Has anyone other than yourselves paid for your make-up or your clothes that you wore to the State Dinner on November 24, 2009?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Again, you are saying that it would be self-incriminatory for you to answer the question with respect to who paid for the glamorous clothes that you wore to the State Dinner?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Were your preparations for attendance at the State Dinner taped by any media body, television show—Bravo, NBC, or others?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Were you paid by anyone for your activities on November 24?

Mr. SALAHI. On advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Was your attendance at the State Dinner a planned attempt by yourselves to garner yourselves notoriety with respect to the Housewives of Washington, DC reality show?

Mr. SALAHI. On the advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Do you feel any regret for any of the actions you took related to the White House State Dinner and the resulting problems it has caused the White House and others?

Mr. SALAHI. Under advice of counsel I respectfully assert my right to remain silent and decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. I would imply from your actions today that you don't feel any regret for any of the problems that you have caused. That is what I would surmise from that. If your intent was simply to attend the White House State Dinner at the invitation of someone at

the Pentagon or other agency of the United States Government—and that you claim this is a misunderstanding or a miscommunication—are you willing to forego any financial gain that may arise due to this incident, including paid appearances, books, article fees, or television opportunities such as any reality TV shows?

Mr. SALAHI. Ma'am, pursuant to section 1 of your own subpoena, I am only compelled to respond to questions reflecting the circumstances surrounding the White House State Dinner of November 24, 2009. Based on the fact the question has nothing to do with the circumstances surrounding these events, I respectfully decline to answer your question.

Ms. KILROY. Mr. Chairman, I think these witnesses have a right to invoke the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination when it relates to criminal activity or something that would incriminate them in a criminal proceeding. I also think that they may be offering the Fifth Amendment to questions that do not so involve such jeopardy, and I ask that we consider what response we should have to these witnesses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I thank the witnesses for their testimony and the Members for their questions.

Before being dismissed, I would remind the witnesses that the Members of the committee may have additional questions for you, and we will ask you to respond expeditiously in writing to those questions.

Just for the committee Members, as you know, we have another item to take up as soon as the hearing is adjourned.

This concludes Day 2 of this hearing. Hearing no further business, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:13 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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