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BENGHAZI: THE ATTACKS AND THE LESSONS LEARNED

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2012

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 8:03 a.m., in room SH–216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Boxer, Menendez, Cardin, Casey, Shaheen, Lugar, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Inhofe, Isakson, and Barrasso.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. The hearing will come to order. My apologies to everybody for the switch in time, but as everybody knows, with the loss of our colleague, Senator Inouye, the course of events was uncertain yesterday. And it was decided that his remains will be brought here at about 10 a.m. And everybody felt that it would be inappropriate for us to be simply having a hearing and to prevent Senators from being able to attend. And all of us would like to attend that. So we are going to try to compact this into the period of time we have between now and about quarter of so that Senators can get over there to take part in that ceremony. In addition, obviously with the switch in time, some colleagues and others have not yet gotten here.

I do want to share some thoughts at the appropriate time about Senator Lugar and Senator Webb and Senator DeMint, who will be leaving the committee. But I think I will wait until some more of our colleagues are here to be able to share those thoughts.

I want to thank everybody for joining us this morning.

As everyone is aware, Secretary Clinton is recovering from a serious virus and concussion. And given her condition, it was simply not possible for her to appear here today. We all wish her a speedy recovery. And in her place we have both deputies from the State Department, and I want to thank them for coming in on short notice.

Let me emphasize this, please, to everybody. All of you who know Hillary know that she would rather be here today. I know how deeply she feels the importance of the discussion that we're having today, and I assure you it is not her choice that she is not here today. And she looks forward to appearing before the committee in January, and I want to make that clear.

I also want to emphasize that every member of this committee felt the loss of Ambassador Chris Stevens and his team in a very personal way. We knew Chris Stevens well before he came before us for confirmation. He was a Pearson fellow for Senator Lugar and the committee. We knew the depth of his character, of his intelligence, and his dedication. His death was a horrible blow in personal terms to the committee, as well as to the country and to his family.

It evoked an outpouring of emotion on our committee from the condolence book in our office in the Capitol to the private gestures of members of this committee who shared their grief in private ways—at Senate 116, signing the condolence books, touching the picture, saying a prayer.

Equally tragic was the loss of three courageous men whom I have personally never met, but whose families I had a chance to greet and hug when the military brought their loved ones' remains back one last time to Andrews Air Force Base. That heartbreaking and solemn ceremony brought home the impact of our Nation's loss.

Glen Doherty was a former Navy SEAL. He was also from my home State, and I talked a couple of times with his family. And Tyrone Woods was a former SEAL, Sean Smith, an Air Force veteran; all people for whom service to country was their life. So today we again say thank you to all of them, to the fallen and the families. They all gave to our Nation, and we are grateful beyond words for their service and their sacrifice.

From the very beginning of the Benghazi events, every member of this committee has shared with the President and Secretary Clinton our determination to get all the facts about what happened and why in Benghazi. We submitted many questions to the State Department to be incorporated into this investigation, and we are very pleased that they have been.

We have had a number of classified briefings for our members, and yesterday the committee heard from Ambassador Tom Pickering and ADM Mike Mullen. We heard them deliver a very frank and comprehensive set of findings of the Accountability Review Board.

Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen are two of America's most distinguished and capable public servants. Ambassador Pickering has served as an Under Secretary of the State Department and an Ambassador to seven countries, among them India, Russia, Israel, and other important nations. Admiral Mullen, as we know, was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I think that their backgrounds, their service to our country, showed up starkly in the quality of the Board's report. And I want to thank them for their extraordinary service to our country, and I want to thank Secretary Clinton who appointed them—who selected them.

The report pulls no punches. It tackles head on many of the questions that we have been asking. The report makes 29 recommendations in total, 5 of which are classified. Secretary Clinton has embraced every single one of them. In fact, she has gone above and beyond the Board's recommendations by taking immediate steps to strengthen security at high-threat posts, and requests from Congress the authority to reprogram funds to increase diplomatic

security spending by $1.3 billion. In Washington where too often we see the recommendations of blue ribbon panels ignored, delayed, or deferred, as they were for a long time on even the 9/11 Commission, I think the Secretary's swift action underscores how determined she is to apply the lessons of Benghazi.

Clearly mistakes were made, and we learned of those yesterday in very stark terms about the mistakes leading up to the attacks. The report makes that very clear, and one of the most candid and important observations was the failure by certain leaders to see the forest through the trees. There were clear warning signs that the security situation in Libya had deteriorated, and going forward it is important, and I think it is important for all of us to think in terms of going forward, that we need to do a better job of ensuring a free and open dialogue among ambassadors, their embassy security personnel, and officials in Washington where decisions on security staffing levels and funding are made.

Now, as we draw the lessons, I want to be crystal clear about something else. Congress also bears some responsibility here. Congress has the power of the purse. We use it for any number of things, but it is our responsibility. And for years we have asked our State Department to operate with increasingly lesser resources to conduct essential missions. And because of the gridlock and excesses in the Senate and Congress itself, we have not even been able to pursue the regular order of authorizing legislation. That must change. And in the next session of the Congress, I hope it will.

As in any government entity, we know that when a budget is cut and money is fungible, you stretch every dollar. So for some time now, overseas resources have been withheld or cut, and important foreign policy objectives have, in some cases, been starved. Consider that last year we spent approximately $650 billion on our military. By contrast, the international affairs budget is less than one-tenth of the Pentagon's. Secretary Gates has spoken about this and strongly urged the Congress to redress that imbalance, but we have not yet. Admiral Mullen once pointed out, "The more significant the cuts, the longer military operations will take, and the more and more lives are at risk."

So we need to make certain that we are not penny-wise and pound-foolish when it comes to supporting America's vital overseas interests. Adequately funding America's foreign policy objectives is not spending. It is investing in our long-term security, and more often than not it saves far more expensive expenditures in dollars and lives for the conflicts that we fail to see or avoid.

We need to invest in America's long-term interests in order to do the job of diplomacy in a dangerous world. And this report makes that crystal clear.

Since 1985, I have had the privilege, as most of you, of making official journeys to one trouble spot or another.

I have met a lot of our men and women in the Foreign Service, as all of you have, and we have sat and talked about the work that they do and the lives that they lead. They spend years learning the languages of a country so that they can be on the front lines of direct diplomacy—foreign policy outdoors, as my dad used to call it.

When my father served in Berlin after World War II, I remember my mother sometimes looking at the clock nervously in the evening when he was late for coming home to dinner in a city where troops guarded the line between East and West, and the rubble of war was still very fresh. But my father knew that what he was doing was worth whatever the risk might have been, and so do the Foreign Service personnel that we send all over the world today. They want to be accessible to people on the ground. They need to be accessible to people on the ground when they are representing our country. They want those people to see and touch the face of America.

It is no understatement that our diplomats are on the front lines of the world's most dangerous places. They leave their families behind. They miss holidays at home. They risk their safety to make the world safer and to protect the interests of our country. They do not join the Foreign Service to get rich, and sadly many of them are only—their names are only learned when a tragedy like Benghazi takes place. Our diplomats do not wear a uniform, but they swear the same oath as the men and women of our Armed Forces, and their sacrifice is no less important.

So take note, everybody. As we learned yesterday, the Board's report calls for an investment of $2.3 billion a year over 10 years in order to meet the fundamental charge of protecting our personnel overseas. We owe it to them, to our responsibility, and to the memory of Chris Stevens and those others who have lost their lives to make good on that request. And I make that clear today.

Some may ask why we are in Benghazi. The reasons are really central to everything that we want our Foreign Service to do. They are central to advancing America's values and furthering our security. We are in Benghazi because that is where the revolution in Libya began. That is where the vanguard of the transition is today. That is where some principle actors in the future of Libya come from.

We were there to learn and help Libyans deliver on the promise of their revolution. And many of our most important contacts and the future leaders of Libya reside in the volatile east. We have to be on the ground outside the wire reaching out to those people. That is the enterprise of U.S. foreign policy today to help men, women, and children around the world share in the vision of democracy and the values of freedom, and through it to bring stability to whole regions of the world and reduce the threats to our Nation.

I believe we all ought to be very proud of what we have achieved in Libya. By taking military action when we did, we liberated a country that had been under the yoke of a dictator for more than 40 years. We gave the Libyan people a fighting chance for their future, and I am convinced that we prevented the slaughter of thousands of innocent lives.

The tragic events of the last 9/11—2012—illustrate the magnitude of the challenge ahead, that the thousands of everyday Libyans who marched in outrage against the militias with signs declaring their love for Chris Stevens and for the United States, their gratitude for our country, provide, I think, a measure of hope. That demonstration of affection for America and for our envoy who gave

his life, for those people summed up exactly why we must not look inward and walk away.

Finally, let me just say that what happened in Benghazi really cannot be seen in isolation. There is a truth about diplomacy and Foreign Service that needs to be processed through the committee and the Congress and the country as we examine the events of Benghazi. We have an expeditionary diplomatic corps, and they do face very real risks every day; day in and day out.

Bad things have happened before, and bad things will happen again; unfortunately in the future. There will always be a tension between the diplomatic imperative to get outside the wire and the security standards that require our diplomats to work behind high walls, concertina wire, and full body searches. We do not want to concertina wire America off from the world. Our challenge is to strike a balance between the necessity of the mission, available resources, and tolerance for risk.

We have talked about this on this committee. We have had hearings specifically about the design of our embassies, the danger of becoming a fortress America. And we need to be safe, but we also need to send the right message to the people that we are trying to reach.

I distinctly remember feeling and seeing the difficulty of this in Vietnam where villagers would examine us suspiciously and give us a stare, an unmistakable stare, that raises many more questions than we are ever able to answer.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, I have revisited that stare. As you pass through a village with masses of guns, and big armored personnel carriers, and Humvees. And the look of confusion and alienation from average Iraqis or Afghans who just do not understand why we are rumbling through their streets that way is unmistakable. I will tell you, every diplomat worth their salt feels this tension and worries about the misimpression our security footprint can create in the minds of the very people that we are trying to reach, an impression that is starkly revealed on their faces when you are surrounded by gun-toting security personnel.

So balancing our values and our interests with the risks inherent in 21st century diplomacy is sort of fundamental to the questions raised by the events in Benghazi, by what we are here to talk about today. To paraphrase Ambassador Ryan Crocker, we need to be in the business of risk management, not risk avoidance.

So there are costs, but that is no reason to retrench from the world, and it is, I think, a reason to honor the memory of Ambassador Stevens and the others who were deeply committed to a strong American role in the world. That is why he was out there.

So in the end, colleagues, we are all Americans first.

We cannot lose sight of that fact, particularly in the face of this tragedy. And we are very pleased that Secretary Burns, Secretary Nides, have come here today. Secretary Burns recently established the Christopher Stevens Youth Network to honor Chris' memory by building bridges of understanding and compassion between American youth and their Middle Eastern peers. And we look forward to continuing that work with them.

Senator Lugar.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you in welcoming back Secretary Burns and Tom Nides, both who are good friends of the committee. And we extend our very best wishes to Secretary Clinton as she recovers from her mishap.

The Secretary's pace of activities has been, during the last several years, extraordinary by any measure, and we are grateful for her devoted service to our country and for the courtesy she has shown to our committee throughout her tenure.

Our hearing today gives us a chance to review events at our consulate in Benghazi that resulted in the deaths of Ambassador Christopher Stevens, Foreign Service officer Sean Smith, two U.S. Embassy security personnel, Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods. Many questions have been raised about this tragedy, including whether we had sufficient intelligence ahead of time and whether there was a breakdown in security protocols.

Our interest in these questions is especially personal because of our respect and affection for Ambassador Stevens, who became a good friend of this committee while he was detailed to my staff during 2006 and 2007. His advice to me on the complexities of events and relationships in the region was invaluable. After he went back to State, he continued to brief staff from time to time, and he returned to meet with me after his remarkable tour as the United States representative to the rebels in Benghazi. All of us have read accounts of Chris Stevens' extraordinary service.

It should be clear to everyone he was personally instrumental in advancing United States interests in Libya.

Chris was providing the kind of energetic leadership we need for our embassy teams. He went beyond the embassy walls to meet and converse with soldiers, militiamen, shopkeepers, and villagers, as well as with ministers, and generals, and bureaucrats. Like U.S. Embassy personnel around the world, Chris and his team recognized that effective diplomacy in this era carries substantial risk.

Nevertheless, it is up to the President, the State Department, and the Congress to ensure that our diplomats have enough support and security to do their jobs as safely as possible. And just as we give our men and women in uniform the weapons they need to carry out their mission, we must make sure our diplomats have all the tools that they need, which include a safe place to work.

Embassies are both outposts of the U.S. government and symbols of our country, and as such, they have been prime targets for terrorists. Almost every day the United States receives threats against its embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic facilities overseas.

When I became chairman of this committee for the second time in 2003, one of the first things I did was to initiate an inquiry into embassy security. We conducted a hearing and numerous briefings on the topic, and my staff interviewed dozens of security and diplomatic personnel at embassies around the world.

I also commissioned a GAO report that was completed in 2006, and that report noted the significant progress that had been made by the State Department in building secure embassies in a cost-efficient manner. It recommended that the State Department

develop an integrated and a comprehensive facilities plan to more closely track costs and results.

Working with former Secretary of State Powell, we initially were successful in getting extra money to accelerate the embassy construction program. But in my view, funds for this purpose have never caught up to the threats faced by our diplomats in the post-9/11 world. There have been suggestions that cross-considerations contributed to the inadequate protection in Benghazi.

Last week as preparations for this hearing were getting under way, the State Department announced it would seek $1.4 billion in the 2013 budget for an increased security proposal based on a recent review of the worldwide security posture. I am pleased to see that the proposal notes, "We must ensure we strike the right balance between security and engagement." I will be interested to hear from the panel how the Obama administration would apply these funds and how they would affect the pace of new embassy construction and staffing levels in the diplomatic security service.

In the end, however, our embassies are unlikely to be both effective and safe if Congress fails to devote adequate funding to the 150 Account, which pays for State Department operations. We should not forget lessons learned in the 1990s when the sharp budget cuts at the State Department at the same time we were establishing many new embassies in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. This funding squeeze resulted in clear deficiencies in our overall diplomatic capabilities that took years to correct.

The State Department budget remains a popular target for cuts. In recent years, we have avoided the type of funding decline that the State Department experienced in the 1990s. But it is still common for Congress to vote on indiscriminate proposals that show little understanding of the contributions of the State Department to the safety and prosperity of our country.

Diplomacy is not a luxury. It is essential to American national security, especially in an era of terrorism. We should fund the State Department as the national security agency that it is.

I look forward to a discussion with our witnesses, and I thank the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar, thank you very much. If I could ask the committee, I am going to just take a moment.

I will not ask questions. I am going to yield my time so that others have more time because I took a little longer with the opening.

But I just want to say a special thank you—this will be Senator Lugar's last hearing. It is the committee's last hearing in this session. And I think whether you have served as chairman or as ranking member, Dick, you have been just an extraordinary influence on all of us. I know the Nunn-Lugar initiative is synonymous with bipartisanship in serious foreign policy, and it stands as an amazing legacy.

But I will always remember the work we did on the Philippines, your efforts on the floor. You have always had this amazing humility and sense of purpose in finding the common ground and reaching out to people on both sides of the aisle.

Every member of the committee has joined in presenting you with a resolution, and I just want to read just the introduction. "Whereas throughout his 36 years in the United States Senate,

Richard Lugar has served Indiana and the United States with grace, distinction, and tenacity, and will have many more contributions still to a Nation he reveres and that reveres him." And we want to present this to you, everybody on the committee, my friend.

[Applause.]

Senator LUGAR. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to serve with each one of you. Thank you for this very special tribute.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, sir. Well, it is small compared to your service, but we honor you.

And then finally, we are also going to be losing Jim Webb and Jim DeMint. Jim, as we all know—Jim Webb came here and did something very few freshmen can do by getting a major piece of legislation passed, a new GI bill. And on the committee, he has been really critical to our thinking about the Far East. He was the first American to visit Burma in 10 years, and I am proud to say I think I may have been the one who was there before that. But he changed the policy. He knew we had to lift the sanctions and move it. And his contribution to our thinking about the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the continued efforts on Vietnam MIAs has been a superb contribution. He is a great thinker, and we appreciate his service.

And Jim DeMint—Jim DeMint and I have obviously disagreed on a number of the treaties, a number of the initiatives in front of the committee. But one of the great things about Jim DeMint is you know where he stands. He knows what he believes; we do. He has been a terrific advocate for his point of view, and we are confident that in the new hat that he is going to wear, we are going to continue to debate and continue to feel his presence. And we thank him very much for his service on the committee also. So we thank both of them.

Gentleman, thanks for putting up with our early efforts here on the committee. We appreciate your patience. And thank you very, very much for being here today.

Who is first? Secretary Burns, you are you going to lead off? Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM J. BURNS, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. BURNS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity.

Secretary Clinton asked me to express how much she regrets not being able to be here today. And I would like to join you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Secretary and the men and women of the Department of State in expressing our deep respect and admiration for the many years of service of Senator Lugar to our Nation.

Since the terrorist attacks on our compounds in Benghazi, State Department officials and senior members from other agencies have testified in four congressional hearings, provided more than 20 briefings for members and staff, and submitted thousands of pages of documents, including the now full classified report of the Accountability Review Board.

Secretary Clinton has also sent a letter covering a wide range of issues for the record. So today I would like to highlight just a few key points.

The attacks in Benghazi took the lives of four courageous Americans. Ambassador Stevens was a friend and a beloved member of the State Department community for 20 years. He was a diplomat's diplomat, and he embodied the very best of America.

Even as we grieved for our fallen friends and colleagues, we took action on three fronts. First, we took immediate steps to further protect our people and our posts.

We stayed in constant contact with embassies and consulates around the world facing large protests, dispatched emergency security teams, received reporting from the intelligence community, and took additional precautions where needed. You will hear more about all this from my partner, Tom Nides.

Second, we intensified a diplomatic campaign aimed at combating the threat of terrorism across North Africa. We continue to work to bring to justice the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi, and we are working with our partners to close safe havens, cut off terrorists' finances, counter extremist ideology, and slow the flow of new recruits.

And, third, Secretary Clinton ordered an investigation to determine exactly what happened in Benghazi.

I want to convey our appreciation to the Accountability Review Board's chairman and vice chairman, Ambassador Tom Pickering and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, and also Hugh Turner, Richard Shinnick, and Catherine Bertini.

The Board's report takes a clear-eyed look at serious systemic problems; problems which are unacceptable, problems for which, as Secretary Clinton has said, we take responsibility, and problems which we have already begun to fix.

Before Tom walks you through what we are doing to implement fully all of the Board's recommendations, I would like to add a few words based on my own experiences as a career diplomat in the field.

I have been a very proud member of the Foreign Service for more than 30 years, and I have had the honor of serving as a chief of mission overseas. I know that diplomacy by its very nature must sometimes be practiced in dangerous places. As Secretary Clinton has said, our diplomats cannot work in bunkers and do their jobs. When America is absent, there are consequences. Our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened.

Chris Stevens understood that as well as anyone. Chris also knew that every chief of mission has the responsibility to ensure the best possible security and support for our people. As senior officials here in Washington, we share that profound responsibility. We have to constantly improve, reduce the risks our people face, and make sure they have all the resources they need.

That includes the men and women of the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service. I have been deeply honored to serve with many of these brave men and women. They are professionals and patriots who serve in many places where there are no Marines

on post and little or no U.S. military presence in-country. Like Secretary Clinton, I trust them with my life.

It is important to recognize that our colleagues in the Bureaus of Diplomatic Security, and Near East Affairs and across the Department at home and abroad get it right countless times a day, for years on end, in some of the toughest circumstances imaginable. We cannot lose sight of that. But we have learned some very hard and painful lessons in Benghazi. We are already acting on them. We have to do better. We owe it to our colleagues who lost their lives in Benghazi. We owe it to the security professionals who acted with such extraordinary heroism that awful night to try to protect them. And we owe it to thousands of our colleagues serving America with great dedication every day in diplomatic posts around the world.

We will never prevent every act of terrorism or achieve perfect security, but we will never stop working to get better and safer. As Secretary Clinton has said, the United States will keep leading and keep engaging around the world, including in those hard places where America's interests and values are at stake.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burns follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM J. BURNS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity. Secretary Clinton asked me to express how much she regrets not being able to be here today.

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The CHAIRMAN. Secretary Nides.

STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS R. NIDES, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. NIDES. Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, members of the committee, I also want to thank you for this opportunity.

I want to reiterate what Bill has said. All of us have a responsibility to provide the men and women who serve this country with the best possible security and support. From senior departmental leadership studying the priorities, to the supervisors evaluating security needs, to the Congress appropriating sufficient funds, we all share this responsibility. Secretary Clinton has said that as Secretary of State, this is her greatest responsibility and her highest priority.

Today I will focus on the steps we have been taking at Secretary Clinton's direction and that we will continue to take.

As Bill said, the Board reports take a clear-eyed look at serious, systemic problems for which we take responsibility and that we have already begun to fix. We are grateful for the recommendations from Ambassador Pickering and his team. We accept every one of them, all 29 recommendations. Secretary Clinton has charged my office with leading a task force that will ensure that all 29 are implemented quickly and completely, and also to pursue steps above and beyond the Board's report.

The Under Secretary of Political Affairs, the Under Secretary for Management, the Director General of the Foreign Service, and the Deputy Legal advisor will work with me to drive this forward.

The task force has already met to translate the recommendations into 60 specific action items. We have assigned every single one to the responsible bureau for immediate implementation, and several

will be completed by the end of this calendar year. Implementation of each and every recommendation will be under way by the time the next Secretary of State takes office. There will be no higher priority for the Department in the coming weeks and months.

And should we require more resources to execute these recommendations, we will work closely with the Congress to ensure that they are met.

As I said, Secretary Clinton wants us to implement the ARB's findings and do more. Let me offer some very clear specifics.

For more than 200 years, the United States, like every other country around the world, has relied on host nations to provide security for our embassies and consulates. But in today's evolving threat environment, we have to take a new and harder look at the capabilities and the commitments of our hosts. We have to reexamine how we operate in places facing emerging threats, where nationalist security forces are fragmented or may be weak.

So at Secretary Clinton's direction, we have moved quickly to conduct a worldwide review of our overall security posture with particular scrutiny on the number of high-threat posts. With the Department of Defense, we deployed five interagency security assessment teams made up of diplomatic and military security experts to 19 posts in 13 countries, an unprecedented cooperation between our Departments at a critical time. These teams have provided us a roadmap for addressing emerging security challenges.

We are also partnering with the Pentagon to send 35 additional Marine detachments. That is about 225 Marines to medium- and high-threat posts where they will serve as visible deterrence to hostile actors. This is on top of the approximate 150 detachments we have already deployed.

We are aligning our resources to our 2013 budget request to address physical vulnerabilities, and we have reinforced structures wherever needed, and to reduce risk from fire. And let me add, we may need your help in ensuring that we have the authority to streamline the usual processes to produce faster results.

We are seeking to hire more than 150 additional diplomatic security personnel, an increase of about 5 percent, and to provide them with the equipment and training they need. As the ARB recommended, we will target them squarely at securing our high-threat posts.

I want to second Bill's praise for these brave security professionals. I have served this Department for only 2 years, having come from the private sector. However, I have traveled to places like Iraq and Afghanistan and Pakistan, and I have seen firsthand how these dedicated men and women risk their lives every day. We owe them a debt of gratitude as they go to work every day to protect us in more than 270 posts around the world.

And as we make these improvements in the field, we are also making changes here in Washington. We have named the first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for High Threat Posts within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. We are updating our deployment procedures to increase the number of experienced and well-trained staff serving in those posts. And we are working to ensure that the State Department makes decisions about where our people operate in a way that reflects our shared responsibility for security.

Our regional Assistant Secretaries were directly involved in our interagency security assessment process, and will assume greater accountability for securing our people at our posts.

We will provide the Congress with a detailed report on step we are taking to improve security and implement the Board's recommendations. We will look to you for support and guidance as we do this. Obviously part of this is about resources. We must equip our people with what they need to deliver results safely, and we will work with you as needs arise. But Congress has a bigger role than that. You have visited our posts. You know our diplomats on the ground and the challenges they face. You know our vital national security interests are at stake, and you know that we are all in this together.

We look forward to working with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your support and counsel and for this opportunity to discuss these important matters. We would both be happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nides follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE THOMAS R. NIDES

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I also thank you for this opportunity.

I want to reiterate what Bill said: All of us have a responsibility to provide the men and women who serve this country with the best possible security and support. From senior Department leadership setting priorities . . . to supervisors evaluating security needs . . . to Congress appropriating sufficient funds—we share this responsibility. Secretary Clinton has said that, as Secretary of State, this is her greatest responsibility and highest priority.

Today I will focus on the steps we have been taking at Secretary Clinton's direction, and that we will continue to take.

As Bill said, the Board's report takes a clear-eyed look at serious, systemic problems for which we take responsibility and that we have already begun to fix.

We are grateful for the recommendations from Ambassador Pickering and his team. We accept every one of them—all 29 recommendations. Secretary Clinton has charged my office with leading a task force that will ensure that all 29 are implemented quickly and completely—and to pursue steps above and beyond the Board's report. The Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Under Secretary for Management, director general of the Foreign Service, and deputy legal advisor, will work with me to drive this forward.

The task force has already met to translate the recommendations into about 60 specific action items. We have assigned every single one to a responsible bureau for immediate implementation—and several will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Implementation of each and every recommendation will be well underway by the time the next Secretary of State takes office. There will be no higher priority for the Department in the coming weeks and months. And, should we require more resources to execute these recommendations, we will work closely with Congress to ensure these needs are met.

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We're also partnering with the Pentagon to send 35 additional detachments of Marine Security Guards—that's about 225 Marines—to medium and high threat posts, where they will serve as visible deterrents to hostile acts. This is on top of the approximately 150 detachments already deployed.

We are realigning resources in our 2013 budget request to address physical vulnerabilities and reinforce structures wherever needed, and to reduce the risks from fire. And let me add: We may need your help in ensuring we have the authority to streamline the usual processes and produce faster results.

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I want to second Bill's praise for these brave security professionals. I have served in this Department for only 2 years, having come from the private sector. However, as I have traveled to places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, I have seen firsthand how these dedicated men and women risk their lives. We all owe them a debt of gratitude, as they go to work every day to protect our more than 275 posts around the world.

As we make these improvements in the field, we're also making changes here in Washington.

We named the first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for High Threat Posts within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. And we're updating our deployment procedures to increase the number of experienced and well-trained staff serving at those posts.

We are working to ensure that the State Department makes decisions about where our people operate in a way that reflects our shared responsibility for security. Our regional Assistant Secretaries were directly involved in our Interagency Security Assessment process and they will assume greater accountability for securing their people and posts.

We will provide this committee with a detailed report on every step we're taking to improve security and implement the Board's recommendations.

We will look to you for support and guidance as we do this. Obviously, part of this is about resources. We must equip our people with what they need to deliver results safely, and we'll work with you if needs arise. But Congress has a bigger role than that. You have visited our posts, you know our diplomats on the ground and the challenges they face. You know our vital national security interests are at stake—and that we are all in this together. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your support and counsel. And for this opportunity to discuss these important matters. We would be happy to answer your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Secretary Nides and Secretary Burns.

Senator Lugar is also going to yield his time, so we will go directly to Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. And, Senator Lugar, I will miss you very much.

I want to join in sending my very best wishes to Secretary Clinton as she recovers. And would you please tell her that all of us do? We would like to get that message to her.

And I send my deepest thanks and grief once again to those that we lost, to the families of those that we lost. I know they are suffering, especially in this holiday season.

I praise Secretary Clinton for ordering a truly independent and tough investigation of what happened in Benghazi. I attended a classified briefing with most of my colleagues yesterday, and while I cannot say everything or much, I can say this. I found this to be an extraordinary presentation. It was clear. It was tough. And I believe if we do not listen and follow the recommendations, it would be a disaster for our people out there in the field. And I believe that we will.

And I thank our chairman and our ranking for having this hearing because I know it is the end of the year, but we have to change the way we view the security at our missions because times are changing and he needs are changing.

Look, let us be clear. The administration requested $2.6 billion for embassy and diplomatic security for fiscal year 2012, but the House cut this request by more than $300 million. Now, we, the Senate, helped restore some of the funds, but it still was $200 million short.

Now, I love our military bands. As a matter of fact, I always go to the concerts. And it is just important to note that in the House, there was an amendment to cut some funds from the military bands, which failed, and the funding for the military bands is $388 million.

So all I want to say is we need to get our priorities straight around here, and we cannot walk away and invite another tragedy. And as much as people like to say, well, it is not the money, it is the money. You cannot protect a facility without the funding. I am looking at the security at our schools now just after the tragedy in Connecticut, and it costs money to get the facilities hardened, to get the personnel that are needed.

So Ambassador Stevens was a proud Californian. There is a hole in all of our hearts.

I am going to get to my questions, and I guess I am going to ask it straight out. Do you plan in the next budget to request the funding levels that are necessary for protecting all of our facilities?

Mr. NIDES. The answer to that is "Yes," Senator. I am all too aware, as we all are, of the constraints in which we are living. To remind the committee, as you all are well aware, for everything we do at the State Department, and that includes protecting over 275 locations around the world, for all of the assistance we provide, including the assistance to Israel, all of our programs, including PEPFAR—everything we do at the State Department, as Secretary Clinton has articulated many times, it is less than 1 percent of our Federal budget.

Senator BOXER. So my question is, Are you going to submit to us a plan and the money request that you believe you need, absolutely paying attention to fiscal constraints?

We are not asking for bells and whistles. But will that be what you truly believe you need? Because I hope so, because you cannot count on us to know what the needs are.

Mr. NIDES. There is no question, Senator Boxer, that we will be doing so. As you know, Secretary Clinton asked us—or ordered us—to come to the Congress and amend the 2013 budget request to do three things: to pay for additional Marine deployments in some of our high-risk posts, No. 2, to add $750 million for our construction costs, and, three, to increase diplomatic security about 5 percent.

We are now in the midst of the 2014 budget process. We intend to come back to this committee once we do our assessments. As you know, as I pointed out earlier, we had an assessment team between the Department of Defense and the State Department and looked at 19 high-risk posts. My assumption is we will be coming back to do that.

Senator BOXER. I do not want to cut you off, but I have to because I only have a minute.

Mr. NIDES. Please.

Senator BOXER. So you are going to ask us for what you need, and that is important.

Mr. NIDES. Yes, absolutely.

Senator BOXER. And second, the troubling thing here is that there were repeated requests to implement security upgrades in Tripoli and Benghazi, and as we look at this report, we know what happened. And I would like to know, do you intend to put into place a process that would allow for a second review of these requests by another body within the State Department, because it seems like what happened is the request came. It went to one particular individual or desk, and then it never saw the light of day.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, the answer to that is "Yes." You know, one of the recommendations that ARB has is that we, in fact, look at the requests, how they are given to us, how we examine those requests. And, yes, we will learn from the incidents in Libya and very clear about digging into those requests. As I pointed out earlier, we have already begun to set up individual tasks to look into that.

Senator BOXER. May I ask one last quick question? Thank you. Was it appropriate to rely so heavily on Libyan militias to guard American personnel? How was that decision made, and how do we avoid these types of failures? Are there standard policies and procedures for the hiring of guards? Was Libya an anomaly, or are there other facilities around the world where we are relying on the same type of forces?

Mr. NIDES. Well, as you know, Senator Boxer, we rely upon the Vienna Convention, which we have for over 200 years. The fact for us on the ground is that we rely on the local governments and the government's forces to protect us. We have to do that because we do not have the ability to have enough troops on the ground, and most of the countries will not allow us to.

So one of the tasks that Secretary Clinton asked us to do when we sent out the assessment teams, to ask two very clear questions: Countries intent to protect us and their ability to protect us. And sometimes those two are different. And as we see what we refer to as the new normal, we have to constantly ask ourselves those questions, and that is what we are doing.

Senator BOXER. Would you write to us and let us know if there is any other facilities that are relying on militia? Thank you.

[The written answer by the State Department to Senator Boxer's question follows:]

Host governments are obligated to protect diplomatic missions under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961. Libya was unique, but I will be happy to send up experts to brief you on our security posture in high threat places. In the case of Libya, the militia forces are affiliated with the Government of Libya and the 17 February Brigade personnel were supplied to us by the Libyan Govermnent. Thus, these militia forces were host-nation-provided security.

The Accountability Review Board provided a comprehensive evaluation of serious security challenges that we have already begun to address. Secretary Clinton has accepted all of the Board's recommendations and has asked Deputy Secretary Nides to lead a task force to ensure the recommendations are implemented quickly and completely, as well as to pursue steps above and beyond those recommended in the

Board's report. We look forward to working with the Congress as we take measures to improve security at our posts around the world.

I thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Boxer.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I, too, want to thank Senator Lugar for many, many years of great service, and we will miss him.

And I also want to wish Secretary Clinton a speedy recovery. I do think it is imperative that—we appreciate both of you being here. I think it is imperative that she come before this committee, and I think it would be really a shame to turn the page on this without—and go to a new regime without her being here. So I do look forward to that happening whenever her health permits.

But I thank you for being here, and I do want to say that I was on the ground in Libya right after this happened and was with our team there, and witnessed the shock of them losing the colleagues they lost. Met the JSOC folks who were nothing short of absolute American heroes in what they did. But also witnessed the despair of a group that felt like I think, they were out on a tether and did not have the support of Washington.

I am dismayed that this hearing is already centered on additional money, which may well be needed, but as Senator Boxer just said, we would have no idea because we have never done a top-to-bottom review of the State Department ever since I have been here in the minority for 6 years. And I hope that will change with this next Congress. So we have no idea whether the State Department is using its money wisely or not, and I think that is a shame.

To each of you, I will tell you, what I saw in the report is a department that has sclerosis, that does not think outside the box, that is not using the resources that it has in any kind of creative ways, is not prioritizing. I cannot imagine sending folks out to Benghazi after what we saw from the security cameras and the drones—I cannot imagine that we had people out there with a lack of security existing. And it seems to me that what the State Department would have done is to prioritize, and if, in fact, we cannot have people safely there, not send them there.

So I would just like a brief response from Secretary Nides as to why we did not prioritize that. Secretary Clinton just sent up a notification to Congress asking for $1.3 billion. Why did she never ask for any notification or change of resources to make sure Benghazi was secured? Why did that not happen?

Mr. NIDES. Thank you, Senator. As you know, we have fully and completely embraced the recommendations——

Senator CORKER. I understand—by the way, you all have had 18 ARBs in the past, and you have never fully implemented one yet—not one. So I do not want to talk about this ARB. I want to talk about why you did not ask for the resources for Benghazi just like was done this week on this ARB. Just tell me why.

Mr. NIDES. As you know, Senator, we must reexamine all of our high-risk posts and determine the situation as we see as new evolving risks are occurring. As you are well aware, we are in a situation where the Middle East is evolving, democracies are growing, militaries are forming, and we must look at each and every one of

those sites and every one of our posts and reexamine under a new normal——

Senator CORKER. You were aware of the security risks there. We have read the cables. You were fully aware, and either you send people there with security or you do not send them there. I do not understand why you did not send a notification up with the cables coming in, with concerns about security. Why did you not do just what you did with this ARB seeking additional funds? I do not understand.

The Appropriations Committee has never received from the State Department a notification asking to shift funds for security in Benghazi. I just want you to tell me why that did not happen, because you do it all the time. It happens almost weekly.

Mr. NIDES. Senator, as you know, we are constantly evaluating our security. We are constantly reevaluating where we need funds. And we are constantly evaluating the current situation the ground in all of our countries. As you know—as you are well aware, we have risks all over the world, and we are constantly evaluating and determining at the time.

And clearly, as the ARB points out, mistakes occurred. We need to look at those mistakes. We need to examine those mistakes. We need to make ourselves accountable for those mistakes. And we need to figure out how to make sure this does not happen again.

I should point out, as you know, we get this right about 99 percent of the time. We would like to be at 100 percent without question. We have over 275 posts around the world. Our men and women are in danger all over the world, and we attempt to try to do this 100 percent. And we hope that this ARB and the recommendations, we will actually learn from them and we are determined to make sure this does not happen again.

Senator CORKER. Just one last point. There has been a lot of talk about money, and it is just amazing every time there is an issue we start talking about more money. The fact is that you had 16 site security team personnel on the ground. They were at no cost to the State Department, totally funded by the Defense Department, no money issue. They had been there for a long, long time. They had been extended multiple times at no cost to you other than the lodging for them to be there. The Defense Department totally pays for them.

Tripoli asked that they be extended, and you did not do it. This has nothing to do with money. Why did you not do that?

Mr. NIDES. As you know, Senator, that team was in Tripoli, it was not in Benghazi. Members of that team visited Benghazi a few times. But the team, just to be clear, was posted in Tripoli.

Senator CORKER. And they would have been a team—we only had a person there on the ground 40 days a year. I assume they would have traveled and been there when we had our Ambassador there. So I just do not understand. You talk about money, but you had 16 people there free from the Defense Department they requested that they stay, and you denied that. I do not understand that.

Mr. NIDES. They were extended three times, Senator, and they—but more importantly, the team was, in fact, in Tripoli. And some did, in fact, visit Benghazi a few times during their time.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker, let me just say I think you asked good questions, but I also would ask you to review Admiral Mullen's and Ambassador Pickering's request because it has a very specific set of requirements with respect to funding they talked about.

Senator CORKER. I have reviewed it, and I will say that there have been 18 ARBs. Not a single one of them has ever been fully implemented. So I understand about this process. I am just saying that the culture within the State Department to me is one that needs to be transformed. This committee can help. Maybe the next Secretary of State can help. But the fact is there is a lot of work that needs to be done there.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, want to say to Senator Lugar that he is leaving behind an extraordinary career and lasting legacy. I am sure he is going to serve in many other ways in the future. We appreciate your service, and we certainly remember Ambassador Stevens as the hallmark of what Foreign Service is all about.

Our challenge—both here at home and abroad—is that, in the context of terrorism, terrorists have only to be lucky once. We have to get it right 100 percent of the time. It is a heavy burden and not an easy one. Obviously, this time we did not get it right, but the State Department acknowledges where it made a mistake.

What I find extraordinary, as Congress is always very good at doing, is that it only casts blame on one side, but never seems to take any responsibility of its own. I still hear voices that will not take responsibility. There have been about 18 Accountability Review Boards but, if I am not mistaken, this is the first that is inside the administration.

Obviously, this is going back and forth, and you cannot even implement all of the Accountability Review Board's recommendations since a significant part of the recommendations are about resources and Congress does not have the resources to meet those recommendations.

We need to frame this in the context of making sure that we collectively—both the State Department and Congress—take our responsibilities to protect our embassies and our diplomatic personnel abroad.

In that respect, reading directly from the unclassified section of the report, the Accountability Review Board says, "Among various departments, bureaus, and personnel in the field, there appears to be a very real confusion over who ultimately was responsible and empowered to make decisions based on both policy and security considerations."

Can you tell me, Ambassador Nides, how we are going to change that? It sounds like there are silos. It sounds like there was a lack of understanding, and a lack of clear definition of responsibility. How are we going to meet that challenge and change it in terms of that recommendation?

Mr. NIDES. As recommended by the ARB, we are going to focus very clearly on the issues of organizational structure within Diplomatic Security. We are, two, going to look very closely at the involvement of the Bureau, which oversees the countries in which

the security recommendations are put forward. We are going to make sure that communications between the field and diplomatic security is correct. And we will, as suggested, continue to make sure there are double checks to make sure that those requests are evaluated and looked at with a lot of eyeballs.

So we are going to learn from what the ARB has suggested as we look at the security requirements, but be very clear-eyed about the requests and the determination on the security situation on the ground.

Senator MENENDEZ. So, are we going to have a more horizontal effort within the State Department instead of silos? Both in sharing information and knowledge, but with a clear delineation of who takes the ultimate responsibility?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, sir. We need to learn from this, and I think that was one of the lessons that came out of the report, and we intend to incorporate that not only in our thinking, but in our actual reality of how we do our operations.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, one of the other elements of the report is intelligence: in essence, an intelligence failure. We have relied upon specific threats as the basis of reacting and preparing, versus a careful consideration of a deteriorating threat situation, in general, as a basis for improving security posture. Can you talk about how the State Department seeks to pursue that new reality?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, Senator, sure. I mean, that is a challenge that we need to be much effective in addressing, both within the State Department and also, I think, throughout the intelligence community.

The truth is across Eastern Libya for many months before the attack took place in Benghazi, there was a troubling pattern of deteriorating security, not all of which was directed at the United States. But there has been a tendency, not just in the case of Eastern Libya, but I think across the world in recent years, for us to focus too much on specific credible threats, and sometimes lose the forest for the trees.

And I think that is something that, you know, we were painfully reminded of in the case of the Benghazi attack that we need to do better at. And there are some specific recommendations that the Accountability Review Board has made that we will implement relentlessly. And the State Department will certainly work with the rest of the intelligence community.

Senator MENENDEZ. Finally, we read from the Accountability Review Board report again and listened to the testimonies of both Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen, where they made it very clear that, while many mistakes were made—and they outlined and responded to each of them—a significant problem was resources. We can hide our heads in the sand, or we can ultimately meet that challenge. They say it is imperative for the State Department to be mission oriented rather than resource constrained, particularly with its increasing presence in risky areas of the world that are integral to U.S. national security.

So, in that respect, I hope that when the State Department presents its new budget it asks for what the Accountability Review Board has recommended as one of its suggestions. I also hope that, in fact, it also gives us the sense of the reforms that you are

pursuing so that Congress will feel empowered to be responsible, and to therefore, help the Department of State meet the challenges of our diplomatic support.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, it is really unfortunate that we have to go through an incident like this in order to get our act together, if you would. Everybody here has been to embassies all over the world, and what has already struck me is, first of all, I feel really good when I see those marines standing there and they say, good morning, sir, when you walk in.

But usually before that, you have to go through a tranche of these locals, as you have told us, that are operating under a 200-year-old agreement to protect our operations in their own countries. And, you know, the world has really changed over the last 200 years, and you get a real sense of incompetence when you go through there. Generally, those people are confused. Most of them you wouldn't meet going into a theater here in the United States having the kind of competency that they have.

So I guess what you are going to have to do is instead of treating all these the same, each one is going to have to be treated differently. Every host country is going to have to be treated differently because our reputation in the world or the feeling about Americans in the world has changed dramatically over the last 200 years, and there is countries where, such as Western Europe, where we don't have to have what we have. And yet you go to other places, and I have been shocked in some of the countries I have been in that are not countries friendly to the United States and seen the minimal amount of Marine presence that we have had there.

And then, of course, we all learned, I think, at least I did for the first time—or I guess I had heard it, but it didn't stick previously—that the Marines are there to guard the documents. And I mean, that is shocking. Their first obligation ought to be to protect Americans that are serving in that embassy. I am hoping that is going to change. I am sure it will change.

And it would seem to me the rules of engagement really need review. I looked at those people streaming through the front gate in Benghazi. That wouldn't have taken that much to stop that attack if, indeed, they would have responded to it immediately, it seemed to me. Again, you are looking at film, and I understand it is a lot more sterile than actually being there on the ground at the time.

But when armed people are coming through the front gate, it would seem to me it is time to do something about it, and nothing was done about it until virtually everybody was in.

So, again, I really don't have any questions for you. I have looked at the review board. We all have our own view of maybe what should be stronger, what should be less. But the bottom line, the take-away for me is things are going to have to be done a lot different than what they have been done. And we really need to discriminate amongst countries as to what kind of effort that we put forward.

So, with that, I will yield the rest of my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. No, thank you very much. Good observations.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also want to add my congratulations to Senator Lugar for his incredible career. We are losing a real partner on this committee in the U.S. Senate, but I know you will continue your service to our country. Thank you very much.

And to Secretary Burns and Nides, I thank you for your service, and our prayers once again go out to those who we lost in Benghazi.

I want to follow up on—and one other point I might make, Mr. Chairman, and that is I know you have worked on the State Department authorization bill. I think it is important in the next Congress that we have full committee discussions on the State Department Authorization Act so that we can weigh in in a more deliberative way on the policies that are under the jurisdiction of this committee.

I want to follow up on both Senator Corker and Senator Menendez's points on intelligence. Recommendation 21 is very clear on this, that post 2001 intelligence collection has expanded exponentially. That is true. The Benghazi attacks are a stark reminder that we cannot overrely on the certainty or even likelihood of warning intelligence and that careful attention should be given to factors showing deterioration, threat situations in general, as a basis for action.

Let me just point out that it was clear in Benghazi that the security was deteriorating. Maybe not a specific threat. We didn't have information about that. That was also clear.

We also knew that the local security team was not 100 percent reliable. And yet the security details that we had in Benghazi, as the report points out, were inadequate.

So I would like you to expand more on how we are going to institutionalize careful attention so that we do not allow a situation such as Benghazi to occur in the future. You can't eliminate all threats. We know that. But we also understand there was not adequate security at the Benghazi facility based upon the deteriorating circumstances.

How do we institutionalize that careful attention to make sure that in those types of dangerous assignments that we have adequate security? And I want to add one more thing.

Ambassador Stevens knew Libya perhaps better than any other American. His judgment will never be second-guessed.

But it is important that in dangerous posts that there be more than just the head of mission, who is responsible for the security, no question about it. But that he has the best advice on a broader basis as we go into these types of circumstances. How do we institutionalize that?

Mr. BURNS. Let me start, Senator, because you raise a very good point. I think the truth is, as I said before, first with regard to the intelligence that in eastern Libya, there was a troubling pattern that had developed. A lot of the violence and the security incidents were intra-Libyan. You know, some of them were directed at the U.S. and Western targets, but not all of them.

And I think we made the mistaken assumption that we wouldn't become a major target for those——

Senator CARDIN. But this was also the anniversary of 9/11. There was a lot of reasons to believe——

Mr. BURNS. There were. There were a number of different motives, potential motives, as the ARB report makes clear. And as you said, Senator, Chris Stevens understood Benghazi as well as anyone and understood the risks as well as anyone.

But I think one of the painful lessons we have learned is the importance of being able to take a step back and try to analyze better the broader pattern of security challenges that were emerging and so that there is a sense of responsibility on the part of all of us in the State Department for trying to better understand those challenges and not be so fixated on specific credible threats and then take that into account in dealing with what were the obvious security inadequacies made obvious by the Accountability Review Board in Benghazi.

Senator CARDIN. I know that I am going to be interested and I think all the members of the committee are going to be interested as to how you institutionalize that review that goes beyond just specific threats. And I would hope you would share that with us.

Secretary Nides, you mentioned that there is a streamlining process so that you can move quicker to implement. You also mentioned there may be some concerns with additional Marine assignments with the host country.

Is there anything that we need to be aware of, as you implement these recommendations, as it relates to bureaucratic streamlining that may require congressional attention or problems with host countries as we want to put more Marines in-state, in-country?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, thank you.

It has been an unprecedented cooperation between the State Department and the Defense Department I should say. I mean, not only did they agree to send very competent, very trained officials with our State Department colleagues to those 19 posts immediately, right after the incident, to evaluate all these countries during the period of time of the current unrest that is going on.

But two, one of the recommendations that came back that General Dempsey along with SECDEF Panetta and Secretary Clinton and the White House agreed to, that the use of additional Marine detachments would be enormously helpful. Again, the Senator is correct. The mission of those Marines is, in fact, statutorily to protect classified information, but there is also no question, for all of us who have come into those embassies with the Marine detachments, they are a deterrent. They are imposing deterrence, and it comes with a lot of other things.

So the additional request of the 35 additional detachments, which include about 250 additional Marines, we are also going to be asking to build potential barracks on our grounds, where we possibly can. So the marines, the five individuals in each detachment, could actually potentially live on the facilities that are close by.

So the cooperation between the Defense Department and the State Department, in my view, is somewhat unprecedented for a situation like this, and we will be coming to the Congress for not only the appropriations to pay for that, but also potentially the

authorities in which we will be working with DOD and come and discussing that with the relevant committees.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to begin by commending Senator Lugar on his service to our country. And what I am about to say I hope you will take as a compliment. I have been watching you since I was in high school, and I mean that as a compliment.

Growing up in Miami, foreign policy somehow found its way into our local politics, too, and I have a passion for foreign policy partially by watching your career. I am just pleased that I got a chance to serve with you for 2 years on this committee.

I also want to thank both of our witnesses for being here today and for your service to our country. I do that every time because I know how unrewarding the job could be at times, but how rewarding it could be at others. So thank you for being here.

I want to say this report has really furthered our understanding of what happened in Benghazi, and I appreciate it. There is one part of it that I am, I don't want to say the word "concerned," but I am a bit puzzled by. And that is that it places a lot of the blame on lower level officials, particularly Assistant Secretary level officials.

And why I find that quite puzzling is because Benghazi and Libya, in general, is not some remote outpost. It is not Luxembourg. I mean, this is a country that we were involved in militarily not so long ago in a high-profile intervention.

And so, I am curious because on page 5 of the report, the unclassified version, it talks about the—you know, it was just not a priority for Washington. The special mission was not a priority for Washington when it came to security-related requests, especially those relating to staffing.

So I want to understand who Washington is, and in that frame of mind, I think, Secretary Burns, I have a number of questions. I know that Secretary Clinton visited Libya in October 2011. Did the security situation, the deteriorating security situation come up during her visit there, whether with the country team or in her interactions with the Libyans?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Senator, I am sure in general terms that it did. I wasn't on that trip. So I don't know specifically.

I can speak to my own experience. I also visited Libya——

Senator RUBIO. In July, correct?

Mr. BURNS. I visited in July. I also visited in September after the attack in Benghazi. And so, I can speak to my own experience. And you know, as Secretary Clinton has said, all of us as senior leaders in the Department are accountable and responsible for what happened. And I certainly fault myself.

You know, I accompanied the remains of my four colleagues back after the attack in Benghazi. I had been in the Middle East on a trip and cut short a trip to Iraq to come back with them. And on that long flight home, I certainly had a lot of time to think about sharper questions that I could have asked, sharper focus that I could have provided.

Senator RUBIO. But on your visit in July or September as well—did you go in July?

Mr. BURNS. September—I was in July.

Senator RUBIO. After—correct?

Mr. BURNS. Yes.

Senator RUBIO. Did that issue in specific come up? Did the folks on the ground there say to you, "We are really worried about what is happening here with security. We have made a number of requests."

Mr. BURNS. There was no specific discussion of that. I did talk to Ambassador Stevens in general terms about the security situation, but we didn't talk about specifics at that time.

Senator RUBIO. Now Secretary Clinton met with the Prime Minister of Libya in March. Do you know if the security situation came up in that meeting?

Mr. BURNS. This is in March of?

Senator RUBIO. Of 2012.

Mr. BURNS. I am certain it did. We certainly emphasized the importance of not only improving the security capabilities of the Libyan interim government at that time, we offered a number of programs to help them build those institutions, which remained one of the greatest weaknesses of the Libyan interim government. That was a central feature, as it was in July, when I met with the Prime Minister as well.

Senator RUBIO. But in that particular meeting, you don't know if that—you are pretty sure that the issue came up. You just don't know the full content?

Mr. BURNS. I don't know all the details. No, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Well, you met with the Deputy Prime Minister in June of this year. Did it come up in that meeting?

Mr. BURNS. It did. And again——

Senator RUBIO. What did they say?

Mr. BURNS. Well, the focus there was on urging them and offering support for their development of security institutions, which at that time, and to this day, are still extremely weak.

Senator RUBIO. All right. Who in the Department reviewed or was briefed on the cables that were sent from the post in June and August 2011 regarding the security situation? To what level did those cables get reviewed?

Mr. BURNS. Well, they certainly would have been reviewed up through Assistant Secretary level, and it may be that some of my colleagues on the seventh floor saw them as well.

Senator RUBIO. So beyond that level, were any senior officials beyond the Assistant Secretary level made aware of the repeated requests from the posts for extended or additional security? In particular, there were requests made in March and July 2011. Do you know, beyond the Assistant Secretary level, those requests were ever forwarded in a memo or in some other written document?

Mr. BURNS. I am not aware of any specific memo that went beyond the sixth floor with regard to those specific requests at that time. No, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Do you know if anyone beyond the Assistant Secretary level going up to the Secretary's level, were they made

aware of the more than 200 security incidents that had occurred in Benghazi in the 13 months leading up to the attack?

Mr. BURNS. There were certainly memos that came up to the seventh floor that talked about the deteriorating security situation in eastern Libya. Yes, sir.

Senator RUBIO. And finally, after all these different trips to Libya yourself, the Secretary, others, other senior officials in the State Department, were there any memos produced after those visits to the tune of basically saying we have been to Libya, and by the way, there are two things.

The station is concerned about security in general, and the Libyans are concerned about their ability to provide security as we are relying on them.

Do you know if any memos were produced in that or any high-level meetings about that topic took place above the Assistant Secretary level? Were there any meetings convened, memos produced on that issue?

Mr. BURNS. Well, there were certainly meetings that took place at senior levels with regard to the situation in Libya in general and particularly with regard to the concern about the very weak security capabilities of the Libyan Government at that time. And so, certainly, that was the subject of fairly consistent concern.

And as I said, we made a number of offers and on a number of occasions pushed the Libyan interim government to try to move to accelerate their efforts to develop those institutions, which related directly to the security——

Senator RUBIO. So my last question is beyond the Assistant Secretary level. There was a general and specific awareness of a rapidly deteriorating security situation in Libya, of the repeated requests from the team on the ground for security, and of the inability of the Libyans to——

Mr. BURNS. Senator—sorry. Senator, what I would say is there was certainly a general awareness of both the deteriorating security situation in eastern Libya, and also there was not only a general awareness, but a real concern about the difficulty that the Libyan interim government was having in developing capable security institutions.

Senator RUBIO. Above the Assistant Secretary level, that awareness existed. Correct?

Mr. BURNS. The awareness with regard to the incapacity of the Libyan interim government in developing security institutions; yes, sir. And we worked hard to try to push the Libyans to move faster in that direction.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

Senator Casey.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to reiterate what has been said by many on this panel today about Senator Lugar's great leadership and been a mentor to so many of us, even when he didn't know he was being a mentor, and a great example to us. We are certainly grateful for his service, and I know he will continue to serve in another capacity or many capacities.

We also want to express again the condolences that I have, I know, and so many in this room today, about the loss that the State Department suffered, Ambassador Stevens and the others who were killed. And that is why the questions that we are debating are so grave and so meaningful.

Reflecting upon the challenge that you both have and the State Department has in light of the report and in light of the subject matter that led to the report, because of that, I guess you try to think in your own life what experiences are relevant to inform the questions that you have or the points that you want to make.

Two are relevant in my life. One is the traveling that I have done across the world as a member of this committee—three times in Pakistan, three times Afghanistan, several trips to the Middle East. The last time, Senator Shaheen and I were traveling together, and seeing the difficulty of providing security not only for folks in embassies and consulates, but when Members of Congress travel and the danger that we feel sometimes, even with the knowledge that we have security around us.

So getting that balance right, but as you know, we do have to get it right every time. And taxpayers expect that, and they expect us to put forth every effort. They expect it of you. They also expect it of us.

The other experience I have as a State official leading investigations and audits of public agencies and at times kicking the hell out of them, really hitting them hard, being very critical, calling for people to be fired, demanding accountability for tax dollars and for results.

I do know this, though, when a report is issued and findings are made, you can't simply have us in Congress, or in the case of State officials in my experience, just yelling and screaming about the results and yelling and screaming about recommendations. You have to implement them.

Resources matter. Whether it is personnel or, in the case of some of the work that I did, information technology, hardware, whatever it takes, we have got to dedicate the resources. You cannot get the results that you want just by yelling and screaming. You have got to have investment in resources.

Third. The third point I would make is that your credibility as a department will be greatly enhanced by the pace of implementation, by the demonstrable success you have—in other words, the taxpayers can see that you have made those changes—and by the steps that you are taking now in the next couple of days and weeks.

That is mostly important for the broader concerns that we have, but it is especially important when you come back here and ask for dollars. So I will stand with anyone to say that resources matter. I know that from personal experience. But your credibility would be enhanced when you ask for those resources, when you can specifically focus on what those resources will go for, and how you are going to be able to change the dynamic.

So let me just—I don't have much time, but with that predicate, let me ask a question that I am not sure has been raised yet. Or maybe two quick questions.

No. 1, host country cooperation and partnership. I know there is great variance or it varies by country and by situation. But if either of you, Deputy Secretary Burns or Deputy Secretary Nides, can speak to the question of the challenge of having host country partnership?

And then, Mr. Nides, if you could just quickly one more time walk through the timeline of implementation of some of the recommendations?

Mr. BURNS. Well, first, Senator Casey, I mean, obviously, one of the lessons of all the changes that have taken place across the Middle East in the last couple of years, as you have revolutions and then post revolutionary governments coming into place, is that the development of security institutions in those countries and their capacity for following through on their Vienna Convention obligations for protecting foreign diplomats is very uneven and sometimes extremely weak. And that is something that we have to both understand and adapt to, and that is exactly, as Tom described earlier, what we are determined to do as we make changes and strengthen our security at our diplomatic facilities over the coming years.

Mr. NIDES. And Senator, we have done four very quick things. No. 1, we quickly went up here and asked the Appropriations Committee for additional funds for 2013. As you know, the 2013 appropriations process is already well on its way, as you know.

No. 2, we formed the ISAT teams and got them out into the field immediately with DOD to the 19 posts, and we will have recommendations on those high-risk posts very soon and very quickly.

No. 3, we took the 60 tasks—excuse me, the 29 recommendations and broken them down into 60 specific tasks, and assigned them. I had my first meeting 2 days ago with the steering committee, with the task force, and divided them up, giving them timelines, dates, making sure we will execute many of them, hopefully, before the end of this calendar year and be able to set up for the next Secretary to come in and make sure that we are executing the rest of them.

Then finally, obviously, we named the first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Risk Posts. We have taken those four very quick action steps as we proceed in taking the recommendations of the ARB.

Senator CASEY. Anything you can do to keep us updated as you go. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Casey.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first say that I agree with the sentiments of Senator Rubio in his reference to you, Senator Lugar. Except since we were both in high school at the same time, I didn't get that message. [Laughter.]

But you have done a wonderful job for a lot of years, and we respect you.

Both Senator Corker and Senator Rubio talked about some of the events leading up to the disaster. However, they assumed, I guess, that everyone already knew, and I think it is imperative for us to put these things in the record so that we know what signs were out there.

I am referring to the one sentence on the report that says, "The Board found the intelligence provided no immediate specific tactical warning of the September 11 attacks." We will run over some of these things and then ask you both if you agree with that statement. If it is more than a yes or no answer, you could do it for the record.

In April, two former security guards for the consulate in Benghazi threw IEDs over the consulate fence. In May, the offices of the Red Cross in Benghazi were hit by an RPG.

The Red Cross closed their doors, and they got out of town.

In June, militants detonated an explosive at the perimeter gate of the Benghazi consulate, blowing a hole through it large enough for 40 people to go through. In June, a rocket-propelled grenade hit the convoy carrying the British Ambassador to Libya in Benghazi, and they, like the Red Cross, got out of town. They left.

In June, Ambassador Stevens wrote that the al-Qaeda flags were flying over the government buildings and training facilities in that area. In August, security officers stated that they did not believe the Benghazi consulate could withstand a "coordinated attack." That was in August.

In August, a State Department cable—we are talking about cables now, information that came to you folks—discussed the location of approximately 10 Islamist militias and al-Qaeda training camps within Benghazi. On September 4, Ambassador Stevens warned that Libyan officials had introduced a state of maximum alert in Benghazi.

And then, finally, on September 9, Ambassador Stevens requested additional security, 2 days before it happened. Like the rest of the members of this panel, I knew him. I knew him quite well. I had a great deal of respect for him.

Now in light of all these findings, these are facts that no one has argued with, do either one of you want to say that you agree with the statement that I read first in the report saying that there were no warnings?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Senator, the statement in the report that says that there was no specific tactical threat I think is a statement of fact. But you are right to point out the pattern, the troubling pattern of deteriorating security in eastern Libya in each of the incidents that you discussed.

The reality is that amongst that deterioration or part of that deterioration was a lot of intra-Libyan violence as well. Some of it was targeted against the United States. We did not do a good enough job, as the report highlights, in trying to connect the dots between that troubling pattern, even in the absence of an immediate tactical threat.

Senator INHOFE. OK. And Mr. Secretary Nides, I will assume that you pretty much agree with the statement he made.

Now there isn't time to go into it, but for the record, if you would please respond, I would appreciate it very much.

Mr. NIDES. Yes; I do. Yes; I do.

Senator INHOFE. Then there are two questions. One not so significant. It is pretty obvious. And the other is the most significant question that isn't asked, is not covered in the report, that I would like to get your response to.

The first is, Were the comments of Ambassador Rice completely inaccurate regarding her assertion on five TV shows 5 days after the event with the video responsible for the deaths of Ambassador Stevens and three other Americans?

And the second question, and this is the one that is important, because we all knew, we had testimony. And I will read the testimony of the CIA before the house. It said, "Although the intelligence community knew from day one that al-Qaeda terrorists were responsible for the deadly Benghazi consulate attack, someone cut reference to al-Qaeda and terrorism from the overview they released on September 14 instead of those talking points they added."

Now somebody in the White House—because this report went to the situation room—someone in the White House changed the talking points from General Petraeus and the CIA before they were given to Ambassador Rice. I assume that they were changed and that she was not aware of it or she was aware. That is not too pertinent.

Someone changed it. Do either one of you guys know? Do you care?

Mr. BURNS. Senator, here is what I would say. What happened in Benghazi was clearly a terrorist attack. Secretary Clinton, on the day after the attack, said quite directly that what happened in Benghazi was an assault by heavily armed militants on our compound.

Later that same day, President Obama spoke to an act of terror. What was not clear at that time was exactly which terrorists were involved, what their motives were, exactly how this came about, whether this had been planned well in advance or was more a target of opportunity. And I am convinced, Senator, that my colleagues in the administration who addressed this issue and the intelligence professionals, on whom they relied, operated in good faith.

Their focus was on being as factual as possible, and their focus was on action. And you have to remember, sir, at this time there were mobs coming over the walls of our Embassies in Cairo and Tunis and Sana'a. And that was what people were focused on.

And so, the initial inaccuracies, because just as the ARB report points out, there were no protests before the attack took place. It took several days for the intelligence community to conclude definitively that there weren't any protests and that there weren't any——

Senator INHOFE. Let me respond to that because we are running out of time.

Mr. BURNS. Sure.

Senator INHOFE. And I want to give Secretary Nides an opportunity to respond. Specifically——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we have actually—we have actually run out of time.

Senator INHOFE. Well, I know. Others did, too.

Specifically, the report from the CIA references al-Qaeda and terrorism. That is specific. It can't be any more specific than that. So I will get your response. If you have time, if you will give Mr. Nides time to respond, that is fine. If not, he can do it for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I want him to do it quickly. I am trying to honor other Senators who want to get to the Inouye ceremony. But I think we have time if you can do it quickly.

Mr. NIDES. No, I concur with Secretary Burns's comments, and I do think that the interagency was operating in good faith. As someone who was in the room during those 3 days with Secretary Clinton, our full and complete focus was on saving lives. Sitting there with her as she made calls to leaders of all those countries where our men and women were in danger, that was what our focus was, and that is what we spent our time and energies on.

Senator INHOFE. And you don't know who changed the talking points?

Mr. NIDES. I do not. This was an interagency process. I am not aware of how that occurred. It was an interagency process.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, we would be happy to help you follow up to get that pinned down. I think there is actually some testimony with respect to that within the intel community—or within the Intel Committee.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for being here this morning. I think the report, the Accountability Review Board report was very direct. It was very honest about pointing out that mistakes were made within the agency.

And hopefully, now as the result of the report, as you all have indicated, we can move forward. We can hold people accountable. We can make the appropriate changes and follow up on the lessons that are learned as a result of this tragedy in Benghazi.

I appreciate Secretary Clinton's taking responsibility for what happened and, as she points out in her letter to this committee, for going even further than the recommendations in the report to address the mistakes that were made.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could just interrupt you there? I want to put the letter from Secretary Clinton to me and to Senator Lugar in the record at this time.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

One of the things that you pointed out is that you have gone out to—or there have been teams to assess the 19 State Department locations around the world where they are high-risk areas, and I wonder if you can talk about the metrics that are being used as we think about how we determine what is a high-threat, high-risk location and how we are then responding to those metrics.

Mr. NIDES. We tasked the teams between the Defense Department and the State Department with a variety of questions to ask. The principal question to ask was, What was the ability for the host government to protect us? Not just their willingness, because all of the countries in which we examined, every one of them without question wanted to protect us. And so——

Senator SHAHEEN. Right, and I appreciate that you gave us that information in your testimony.

Mr. NIDES. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. But I wonder if you could be a little more specific. When we asked that question, what then is the followup to that?

Mr. NIDES. Sure. The security professionals then examined the practical things: the abilities for fire, protections of perimeter, how close are they to the street.

I mean, very exact. In fact, we then asked them for recommendations, three sets of recommendations—immediate recommendations, what things need to be done tomorrow, things that could be done between now and 6 months, and then 6 months to a year.

So we got very exact, detailed assessments from each one of the teams. We then put them all in a matrix, and we were basically going through each one of those requirements, putting budget requirements to it, prioritizing them, and we will be coming back to this institution, enlisting and helping you think through that.

But we are getting very exact. This was not an esoteric discussion. It was very clear and very specific requirements for each one of those posts.

Senator SHAHEEN. And apropos Senator Corker and Senator Casey's questions about implementation of the report, have we attached a timeline to all of the various recommendations for when those are going to get done, and is that something that can be made available to this committee?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, we have already—as I pointed out, we broke the 29 recommendations down into individuals tasks.

As mundane as that might sound, it is critically important.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Mr. NIDES. We have assigned individuals to each task.

We have given the dates that we want the tasks completed and whatever recommendations that will actually derive from that. So we can certainly share that with the committee at the appropriate time.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Also can you talk about the coordination between the State Department and the Department of Defense? There is a New York Times story today that points out that at the time of the crisis in Benghazi, the Pentagon had no forces that could be readily sent.

The closest AC–130 gunship was in Afghanistan. There were no armed drones within range. There was no Marine expeditionary unit available to the African Command.

And given the potential for further unrest in Syria, in Egypt, and across the Middle East, it seems to me that that is a question that is really critical as we look at how we continue to provide protection for our personnel on the ground.

Mr. BURNS. Well, Senator, first with regard to the specific issue of Benghazi, Admiral Mullen addressed this publicly yesterday——

Senator SHAHEEN. Right.

Mr. BURNS [continuing]. And it was addressed in the report. And his judgment and the ARB's judgment is there was simply not enough time to have used military force to respond and make a difference in that situation. But you raise a very good broader question. It is certainly something that we will be working through with our colleagues in the Pentagon and elsewhere in the administration.

Senator SHAHEEN. Mr. Chairman, given again the potential for unrest across the Middle East, I would hope that we would follow

up on this specific question because it seems to me to be critical as we look at the situation going forward.

And I will just conclude by adding my personal thanks and appreciation to Senator Lugar. It has truly been an honor to serve with you, and you leave a tremendous legacy for this committee and for the country.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen, thank you.

Let me just say that I have thought a lot about what you have just said with respect to the availability of teams or forces with respect to emergency extraction and/or emergency response in various parts of the world, and I think it is something we really need to pay attention to and think about in terms of deployment and preparedness. So we have got to do that.

Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. I will be real fast so Senator Barrasso can also ask questions, too.

Let me quote my predecessor in the Senate, Senator Sam Nunn, by saying they don't make them any better than Dick Lugar. I would like to echo that statement.

Dick, you have been a great public servant and a great friend. We appreciate you very much.

My statement is in your report—in the report by Admiral Mullen and Secretary Pickering, it says there was a culture of pushback in the State Department. Not a question, but a statement. I have seen that culture of pushback. I have been to embassies in Africa that have made requests, security-related requests that basically were really minor, like securing ground-level residence of an apartment building in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, that couldn't get done until a United States Senator asked for it.

So I think the State Department really needs to look at their process internally to see to it there is a flow to the top of important security requests coming from embassies, and that is just a statement on my part.

My question is, Secretary Nides, you made the statement, and I will read the following, "And let me add, we may need your help in assuring we have the authority to streamline the usual processes and produce faster results."

And this is related to security. What process is inhibiting faster results in terms of security in our embassies?

Mr. NIDES. I was using it broadly speaking. As you know, every time we put a contract out, there is a bidding process that needs to take place. Nothing can be done quickly, as I am learning as someone who has come from the private sector into the Government again for the second time.

And it is done rightly, right? The people—bids are put out. Contracts are awarded. There is a process. That process, unfortunately, takes time. We have oversight that has to be done. The contracts are rewarded and are challenged. And so, we may need to ask for some authorities to allow us to expedite some of those, and that is what I was generally talking about in security and other construction.

Just to build a wall at an embassy could potentially take months to go through the contracting process, to get an agreement, to get

the bid. So we may need to come to this institution to protect ourselves for challenges that we have during the contracting process. And that is what I was referring to, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. So it is competitive bid requirement?

Is that right?

Mr. NIDES. Yes, I am not an expert in it, I should be honest with you. But there is—what I am an expert on, there is nothing can get done quickly. And I think it is—and some of it is legitimate. Some of it needs to be done quickly, and we will need to get the authorities in which to do that.

Senator ISAKSON. What we should do, Mr. Chairman, is investigate negotiated bid because there is a way around the competitive bid process in a security situation where you can react quickly, and we ought to give you that authority.

The CHAIRMAN. That is a very, very good suggestion, Senator, and we will do that for sure.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And first, to Senator Lugar, in Wyoming, we have the code of the West. And, No. 1 is, live each day with courage, and No. 2 is, take pride in your work. And you really are the embodiment then of the code of the West. So you are always welcome in the Rocky Mountain West, and specifically in Wyoming. So thank you so much for your leadership, Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Now for our guests, President Obama claims that the moment he heard about the attack on the United States consulate in Benghazi, he said he gave three directives. And one of those was find out who did this so we can bring them to justice.

In Secretary Clinton's letter to us just 2 days ago, she states, "We continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice." Have you identified the terrorists responsible for the deaths of these four brave Americans and the additional injuries and the destruction of the U.S. facilities?

Mr. BURNS. Senator Barrasso, first, just to restate that we are absolutely committed to bringing those responsible to justice. We are absolutely committed to bringing every resource of the U.S. Government to bear to accomplish that.

We are pursuing this through a number of different channels, some of which can best be discussed in other settings. But as you know, the FBI is leading the investigation. The State Department is very actively supporting this.

I have been in Libya to talk to the Libyan leadership about the importance of their cooperation in the investigation. I think we are making some progress. Our charge on the ground, Ambassador Pope, works every day on this issue in support of the FBI.

I was in Tunisia last week to emphasize to the Tunisian President and Prime Minister the importance we attach to cooperation since they are detaining one of the suspects in the Benghazi attack, and I believe we are making some progress there.

So the answer, sir, to your question is we don't have all the answers yet, but we are working this relentlessly, and I think we are making some progress.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

With regard to implementation of the recommendations of this report, you go through the report and Senator Corker referred to 18 different Accountability Review Boards over a number of years. A recurring theme seems to be stovepipe decisionmaking. I mean, just earlier today, I have heard the bureaucratic verbiage of what got to the sixth floor, what got to the seventh floor.

That doesn't mean anything to Senators or to people at home around the country that see a terrible situation and failed security effort. And truly, what is the State Department going to do to get beyond this, what goes to what floor to make sure that this doesn't happen again?

Mr. NIDES. Senator, as someone who has spent a lot of time in corporate America as well, there is plenty of stovepiping that goes on there, too, as you are well aware.

We have got to learn from this. We have got to hold people accountable, which we are doing, and we have to change processes to make sure we are getting it right.

We are going to relook at them from how we make our decisions as relates to the security decisions, how the Bureau reacts to that, who is making decisions. And we are going to have to embrace this and hold ourselves accountable. Secretary Clinton has been very clear to us, we are accountable for executing these recommendations, and we are going to have to learn from this quickly and get to the bottom of the answers that are set up as it relates to the specific tasks that are laid out for all of us to look at.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the interest of time, I will cease questions there.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Let me just say, as we conclude, I was just thinking, you know, this is a good process. Not a fun process, and it is not meant to be, but it is open accountability.

I have been impressed by the directness and professionalism of the report that was delivered to us yesterday, but I am also impressed today by the just obvious combination of some pain at the losses that took place for which, obviously, everybody feels a sense of responsibility within the Department and the acknowledgment, difficult as it is, that mistakes were made and things have to be done differently.

So I just want to salute both of you for coming in here, and I think good questions have been asked, legitimate ones, and this process will result in improvements. I am confident of that.

So we thank you very, very much for coming in today. It has been, I think, very, very helpful, and we will look forward to working with you with the committee to make sure that the implementation is as effective as possible and to make sure that we do our part, that the Congress steps up here in ways that are important.

I think Senator Corker's questions about the money, you know, we have got to analyze it and see where the improvements can be made. There is no question in my mind that we need additional

resources in significant ways, and we are going to have to document that and do all the things necessary to make it clear.

So thanks very, very much for coming in today. We wish you well and look forward to picking up whenever the next hearing will be with the Secretary.

Thank you.

Thanks. We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:46 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

Letter From Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to Senators John F. Kerry and Richard G. Lugar

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

December 18, 2012

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The State Department family includes nearly 70,000 men and women serving here in Washington and at more than 275 posts around the world. I am responsible for every one of them, and I am enormously proud to be a part of their team.

Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty – four brave Americans who dedicated themselves to serving and protecting our country – were killed during the terrorist attacks on our compounds in Benghazi, Libya on the night of September 11, 2012.

When some of our own lose their lives in service to our country, we must determine what went wrong, and we must learn from it. To fully honor those we lost, we must better protect those still serving to advance our nation's vital interests and values overseas. There is nobody more committed to doing so than I am.

That same week in September, we saw violent attacks on our embassies in Cairo, Sanaa, Tunis, and Khartoum, as well as large protests outside many other posts around the world where thousands of our diplomats serve. In the weeks that followed, we saw terrorist groups in North Africa trying to expand their reach and to destabilize the emerging democracies of the Arab Awakening. All of this amounts to an urgent strategic challenge to the interests and values of the United States in a rapidly changing region.

In the hours and days after the attacks, even as we grieved for our fallen friends and colleagues, I directed action on three fronts:

- First, we took immediate steps to further protect our people and posts in high threat areas, working closely with the Department of Defense. We closely monitored embassies and consulates facing large protests, dispatched emergency security teams, adjusted our post posture, reviewed reporting from the Intelligence Community, and took additional precautions across the board.

- Second, I ordered an investigation to determine exactly what happened in Benghazi and to recommend steps to help improve our security.

- Third, we intensified a diplomatic campaign aimed at combating the threat of terrorism across North Africa and bolstering the region's emerging democracies.

I would like to update you on all three efforts and assure you that we are fixing what is not working, protecting our people, and honoring our fallen colleagues by continuing to champion America's interests and values.

Today I sent you the classified report of the Accountability Review Board chaired by Ambassador Thomas Pickering. His team included Vice Chair and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, as well as Hugh Turner, Richard Shinnick, and Catherine Bertini. These are dedicated public servants with long experience in diplomacy, the military, intelligence, development, and management.

In accordance with the law, I asked this distinguished group to conduct a thorough, candid, and independent examination of the Benghazi attacks. I urged them to work quickly and carefully. I directed everyone at the State Department to cooperate fully, because the families of the fallen, the members of our Department family, and the American people deserve to know what happened.

The Accountability Review Board report provides a clear-eyed look at serious, systemic challenges that we have already begun to fix. I am grateful for its recommendations for how we can reduce the chances of this kind of tragedy happening again. I accept every one of them.

I asked the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources to lead a task force at the State Department to ensure that the Board's recommendations are implemented quickly and completely, as well as to pursue steps above and beyond those recommended in the Board's report. This group has already begun meeting, and the Deputy Secretary, along with the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, the Undersecretary for Management, the Director General of the Foreign Service, and the Deputy Legal Advisor are driving this effort forward.

Because of steps we began taking in the hours and days after the attacks, this work is well underway. We will have implementation of every recommendation underway by the time the next Secretary of State takes office. There is no higher priority for me or my Department.

All of us – from senior Department leadership setting strategic priorities to supervisors evaluating the needs of individual posts to Congressional committees appropriating funds and providing oversight – have a responsibility to provide the men and women who serve this country with the best possible security and support. Most of all, it is my responsibility as Secretary of State.

Let me turn to the steps we have been taking and will continue to take as we implement the ARB's recommendations.

- After the attacks, I ordered a worldwide review of our overall security posture, with particular scrutiny for high-threat posts. We asked the Department of Defense to deploy personnel to serve on five Interagency Security Assessment Teams focused on these dangerous locations. For more than two hundred years, the United States – like every other country around the world – has relied upon host nations to provide security for our embassies and consulates. This responsibility is enshrined in the Vienna Convention and is the bedrock of international diplomacy. In today's environment, however, we have to take a harder look at the capabilities and commitment of our hosts – and how we support our diplomats and development experts in places where national security forces are fragmented and political will may be weak.

- We are partnering with the Pentagon to dispatch hundreds of additional Marine Security Guards to bolster our posts.

- We are realigning resources in our 2013 budget request to address physical vulnerabilities and reinforce structures where needed, including with the goal of reducing the risks from fire. To do so we will need your partnership in ensuring we have the authority to streamline mandatory processes and produce faster results.

- We are working to hire additional Diplomatic Security personnel and to provide them with the equipment and training they need to face today's security challenges. Over the past four years, I have been privileged to get to know many of these brave men and women. I trust them with my life. They are professionals and patriots who serve in many parts of the world where there are no Marines on post and little or no U.S. military presence in country. They are committed to learning from what happened in Benghazi and to constantly improving. We look forward to partnering with the Congress to get this done.

As we make these improvements in the field, we are also making changes here in Washington.

- I named the first-ever Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for High Threat Posts within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security so those Missions that face high risks in dangerous places get the attention they need. We are also updating our deployment procedures to increase the number of experienced and well-trained staff serving at those posts.

- We are also working on how we make decisions within the Department on when, where, and how our people operate, including ensuring that regional Assistant Secretaries assume greater responsibility and accountability for their people and posts. Each and every one of our Ambassadors are charged by the President to "take direct and full responsibility" for the security of all personnel under their authority "whether inside or outside the chancery gate." The leadership of our regional bureaus will be embracing the same accountability and responsibility for the staff serving in these areas.

Finally, I have initiated a number of additional steps above and beyond the Board's 29 recommendations, including:

- Instituting periodic reviews of the Department's 15-20 more high threat posts by Interagency Security Assessment Teams.
- Mandating an annual High Threat Post Review chaired by the Secretary.
- Strengthening mutual security arrangements between the State Department and other government agencies in places where they are not co-located.
- Regularizing protocols for sharing with Congress significant security events involving or against Department personnel or facilities.

We will provide the Committee with a comprehensive report on all the measures we are taking to implement the Board's recommendations and improve security at our posts around the world.

We will also look to you for support and guidance. This is about resources, because while it is absolutely critical that our people have what they need to get the job done, Congress has a bigger role than that. You travel the world, you visit our posts, you get to know our diplomats on the ground and the challenges they face. You know what is at stake – America's vital national security interests. You know that the work they do to help secure our country must continue unabated, and so we need you to take an active role in this process and to share our sense of responsibility and urgency.

Finally, let me turn to our diplomatic campaign, because it is not enough to just play better defense. We have to do more on offense as well.

A number of factors have combined to present a serious strategic challenge to the United States in North Africa and the wider region. The Arab revolutions have scrambled power dynamics and shattered security forces. Instability in Mali has created an expanding safe haven for terrorists. The decimation of al Qaeda's central leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan has led to growing ambitions among the terror network's far-flung affiliates, including al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and in the Arabian Peninsula.

These are not new concerns. Indeed they have been a top priority for our entire national security team. However, after Benghazi we accelerated a diplomatic campaign focused on enhancing our counterterrorism engagement across North Africa.

In the first hours and days after the terrorist attack, I pressed the issue in conversations and meetings with the President of Libya and the Foreign Ministers of Tunisia and Morocco. Two weeks later, I met again with leaders from across the region during the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and at a special meeting focused on the crisis in Mali and the Sahel. In October, I flew to Algeria to discuss the fight against al Qaeda in North Africa and strengthen our security ties. Just last week, I sent Deputy Secretary Bill Burns to co-chair the Global Counterterrorism Forum in Abu Dhabi and a meeting in Tunis of leaders working to build new democracies and reform security services.

In all these diplomatic engagements, and in near-constant contacts at every level, we are focused on confronting al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and helping our partners in North Africa target its support structure – closing safe havens, cutting off finances, countering extremist ideology, and slowing the flow of new recruits.

We continue to hunt the terrorists responsible for the attacks in Benghazi and are determined to bring them to justice. Our embassy in Tripoli has intervened at the highest levels of the Libyan government to secure its support for the FBI investigation, and we continue to assist in every way we can.

Our Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership is building the capacity of ten countries across the region, providing training and support so that they can tighten border security, disrupt terrorist networks, and prevent attacks. We are partnering with security officials who are moving away from the repressive approaches that helped fuel radicalization in the past and instead are developing strategies grounded in the rule of law and human rights.

At the same time, we are using our diplomatic and economic tools to support the emerging democracies of the region, including Libya. Ultimately, that is the best way to advance our interests and values, as well as to provide the region a path away from extremism. That is why Chris Stevens was in Benghazi to begin with. He knew that a new Libya was being born there, and that

America had to be part of it – to support reformers, counter extremism, and stem the dangerous flow of weapons. He believed in this work, and he made a difference.

In the days after the terrorist attack on our post, tens of thousands of Libyans poured into the streets to mourn Ambassador Stevens. They overran extremist bases and insisted that militias disarm and accept the rule of law. It was as inspiring a sight as any we saw in the revolutions across the region.

In the end, we will never prevent every act of terrorism or achieve perfect security. Our diplomats cannot work in bunkers and do their jobs. When America is absent, especially from the dangerous places, there are consequences. Extremism takes root, our interests suffer, and our security at home is threatened. We must accept a level of risk to protect this country we love and to advance our interests and values around the world.

It is our responsibility to constantly improve, to reduce the risks our people face, and to make sure they have the resources they need to do their jobs. I have no higher priority, and no greater responsibility. We have a roadmap for strengthening our security and improving our systems. We look to this Committee to be our partners in that work. Let's get this done together. It is what the men and women who serve our country overseas deserve. They represent the best traditions of a bold and generous nation, and they are no strangers to danger.

Benghazi joins a long list: hostages taken in Tehran in 1979, our embassy and Marine barracks bombed in Beirut in 1983, Khobar Towers in 1996, our embassies in East Africa in 1998, consulate staff murdered in Jeddah in 2004, the Khost tragedy in 2009, and so many others.

The United States refuses to be intimidated. We will not retreat. We will continue to do what America always does: pull together, learn, and emerge stronger and better. We will keep leading and engaging, including in those hard places where America's interests and values are at stake.

Since I was sworn in as Secretary of State, I have had the privilege of leading some of the finest men and women I have ever known. Every one of them is my responsibility, and I will do everything in my power to keep them

safe. I have no higher priority. You are important partners in these efforts, and I look forward to continuing our work together.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Hillary Rodham Clinton

cc: The Honorable Richard G. Lugar
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs
The Honorable Howard L. Berman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

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