



December 9, 2014

SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR THE SECOND GOWDY BENGHAZI HEARING ON WEDNESDAY, DEC. 10

(For BAC media interview information, please contact [Ginni Thomas](#))

On December 10th, the House Select Committee on Benghazi will convene just the second hearing since it was authorized in May. Like the first, it will focus on a discredited report by the so-called Accountability Review Board (ARB), a group charged by the State Department with investigating the murderous attack on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012.

While the Benghazi Accountability Coalition (BAC) welcomes this evidence that the Select Committee is going forward with its own inquiry, the topic of this hearing and the slow pace of the panel's review is deeply frustrating to the millions of Americans who share the BAC's determination to secure answers to the many, still-unanswered questions, changing narratives, obfuscations and lies that have been served up to date. This shared determination has only been further intensified in the wake of the bizarre, whitewashing report issued on a Friday afternoon on the eve of the Thanksgiving recess by the out-going Chairman Mike Roger's House Intelligence Committee.

The bottom line is that, more than two years after the killing of four Americans in Benghazi, the actions and orders of President Obama during this attack on Americans have yet to be fully explained. After first blaming the attack on an "offensive video," numerous media reports, interviews and congressional investigations have revealed that the whole story of Benghazi has yet to be told, and is quite contrary to the Obama Administration's initial and subsequent explanations.

The Benghazi Accountability Coalition is unclear why the Committee has yet to go publicly beyond the ARB process, especially since it has known at least since September 16th – the week of the panel's first hearing – that that process had been compromised and corrupted. That is when evidence of document-tampering to protect then-Secretary of State Clinton was exposed by a whistleblower, Ray Maxwell, thanks to the investigative reporting of former CBS journalist Sharyl Attkisson (<http://benghazicoalition.org/benghazi-bombshell-clinton-state-department-official-reveals-details-of-alleged-document-review/>).

With so many important, yet-to-be addressed questions, the Benghazi Accountability Coalition encourages the committee to be resolute, tenacious and efficient in uncovering which officials are

at fault for: failing to protect adequately and then declining to come to the aid of American diplomats and other personnel in distress; pursuing a failed foreign policy rooted in defective assumptions and judgments; and lying to the American people. There must be accountability for such transgressions and certainty that the appropriate lessons will be learned to prevent their repetition.

Expect Continued Bitter Opposition to the Investigation

In a transparent effort to shield the Obama administration from further questioning, protect key witnesses and ensure the complete truth about Benghazi remains buried forever, opponents of accountability can be expected to use every possible argument to undermine or, if possible, shut down the Select Committee's inquiry. Among the arguments they will use and appropriate rebuttals are the following:

MYTH 1: “*Continuing this Benghazi investigation is a waste of money.*”

RESPONSE:

- There is no way to assign a price to the lives lost – and those that may yet be lost if we do not learn the appropriate lessons from the policy and procedural mistakes made in the run-up to, during and after the Benghazi attack.

MYTH 2: “*A bipartisan report by the House Intelligence Committee released by Republican Mike Rogers on Nov. 21 has closed the book on Benghazi and should end of all further inquiry.*”

RESPONSE:

- Two CIA contractors have set out a [13-point rebuttal](#) to the House Intelligence Report.
- The BAC has produced [a detailed critique of the HPSCI report](#). It was authored by former federal prosecutor Andrew C. McCarthy and former CIA clandestine officer Clare Lopez.
- In the [December 15th edition of the Weekly Standard](#), Steven Hayes and Thomas Joscelyn further discredited the HPSCI report, drawing on interviews with other Republicans on the committee and eyewitnesses, comparing the indictment to the report and more. Their thorough and detailed expose raises serious questions about outgoing Chairman Mike Rogers conduct and judgment.

Among the omissions in the Intelligence Committee report that were identified by the authors of the Standard article were the following:

- the absence of bin Hamid [a known terrorist leader present in Benghazi on 9/11/2012];
- the exclusion of the Khattala indictment;
- the whitewashing of intelligence failures;
- the abuse of non-disclosure agreements seemingly forced upon the Benghazi security team survivors and possibly others;
- the reliance on discredited witnesses;
- the mistreatment of credible ones; and
- the lying to Congress by former Deputy CIA Director Mike Morrell.

Suggested Benchmarks for Success for Truth-Seekers in Congress

Eighteen days have passed since Mike Rogers issued his controversial Benghazi report. This Wednesday's hearing must be used by the Select Committee to set the record straight, drawing upon the Gowdy panel's reported "deep dive" into the facts to illuminate what is wrong with Mike Roger's report and to establish why a continued inquiry and fact-finding is critical.

The Select Committee must fully explore the evidence of document-tampering and -destruction provided by whistleblower Ray Maxwell. Warranting particular attention are Mr. Maxwell's charges that the former Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Cheryl Mills, was present for an unusual [after-hours document operation](#) on Benghazi-related items in a basement room of the State Department in October 2012. Maxwell has said the purpose of the session was to "separate" documents damaging to Clinton before records were turned over to an independent review board probing the Sept. 11, 2012 terrorist attacks on the U.S. mission in Benghazi, Libya.

The Committee needs to establish: who found this operation necessary; who ordered it; what specifically was sought after and/or found in its course; and what was done with that information? Those involved should be questioned/subpoenaed to establish why the truth about Benghazi was not told by the ARB or the State Department.

Additional Questions/Taskings for the State Department Witnesses or the Committee:

Continuing Security Problem at Embassies jeopardizing lives of Americans overseas

- Explain why the embassy in Tripoli had to be evacuated this summer, and why enhanced efforts to improve security continued to pose a security risk to Americans in hot spots in the Middle East despite the public recommendations of the ARB and others.

Alleged State Department document destruction

- Has Ray Maxwell and everyone he claims was involved been deposed?
- Who authorized this effort? Who supervised this document review and destruction, and what specifically was sought after and/or found during the operation, and what was done with that information?
- Who participated in it?
- Have all notes been collected?
- What was the role of then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in this document review?
- Is there evidence of who went in and out of this room, what notes were collected by whom, and/or witnesses interviewed beyond Ray Maxwell?
- Attempt to reconstruct missing documents from State Department electronic records.
- Acquire and declassify all of Ambassador Stevens' cables and emails, especially those on the security situation.

The YouTube video

- Who was involved in drafting the 10:07 pm (Eastern) press release from the State Department on September 11, 2012 blaming the attack on a YouTube video while our people were still fighting, and 2 more would die? The public has a right to know the paper trail. (Until then, the video did not appear in the known intel or State Department internal traffic surrounding the events in either Benghazi or Tripoli.)
- Provide all Cheryl Mills' official and personal emails and phone logs and texts for this time period.
- Request all Cairo Embassy communications with the State Department that document the reporting stream about the YouTube video, snippets of which were shown on Egyptian TV for the first time on September 9, 2012 (at the request of the filmmaker), with the talk show host inviting Muslim outrage over its content. Document the gathering storm of Egyptian and Muslim world anger from September 9-10, 2012, that marked an abrupt change in focus from earlier planned protests about the Blind Sheikh to rage over the video that was especially noted by the Cairo Embassy on social media sites like FB and Twitter. Examine why US Benghazi mission at neither the Special Mission Compound (SMC) nor the CIA Annex was warned to adopt a higher alert status because of the increasing rage across the Muslim world. Ask why Ambassador Stevens and his staff were not ordered by Secretary of State Clinton to move into the CIA Annex on September 11, 2012, as invited, in order to ensure their security.
- Examine why the Intelligence Community apparently failed to note or provide warning to the State Department as well as its own facilities about the September 10, 2012 videotaped attack green light message from AQ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. This video was posted to jihadist websites and should have been noticed immediately. Why didn't the CIA Base in Benghazi know about this video? Why didn't the State Dept. receive warning about this video either?
- Examine the YouTube history of the YouTube video. Why was it launched on YouTube channels apparently owned by a State Department and CIA contractor, channels that were taken down two weeks after the attacks?
- Was "Innocence of Muslims" made and/or launched with U.S. government support, either directly or indirectly, to be used as an excuse for anti-U.S. protests?

In addition, the Select Committee should incorporate into its line of inquiry beyond the State Department witnesses:

- Interview actress Cindy Lee Garcia who claims she was hired by filmmaker Sam Bacile for a very different film, called "Desert Warrior," having nothing to do with Mohammad, and that Bacile then dubbed her performance with the script of "Innocence of Muslims."
- Depose Sam Bacile to determine how he came to make his Mohammad movie and how it was promoted so suddenly (and until now, inexplicably) via YouTube.