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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

October 25, 2012

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012 was a sobering reminder of the virulent and dangerous threats facing the United States, its interests, and its partners. The House of Representatives mourns the deaths of Ambassador Stevens and three other patriotic Americans and continues to honor the bravery and professionalism of the United States personnel on the ground on that day. The national debate since the tragedy, however, demonstrates many Americans remain concerned and frustrated about how your Administration has handled the response to the attack.

No one in your Administration can substitute for your authority and voice to explain to the American people the strategy and policies you directed during and in the aftermath of the terrorist attack. The American public is increasingly reading information contradicting early accounts by your Administration of the causes of the events of the day. In the absence of your direct engagement to clarify these concerns, the public's frustration and confusion is likely to discredit efforts to achieve our shared goals of justice and accountability for the direct assault on American interests and the deaths of four public servants. The new information in the public domain is also deeply troubling to many House Members who attended an interagency briefing in September, as there are perceived inconsistencies between what they learned during the briefing and the now widely available documentation regarding what was known at the time of the attack.

I respectfully request that you, as our country's President and Commander-in-Chief, publicly address the following questions and concerns that are on the minds of many of our fellow Americans:

- It is clear from publicly-available information that Ambassador Stevens and our personnel on the ground in Libya had significant concerns about security in Benghazi and around the consulate. While the Department of State is responding to questions regarding its decisions, it is reasonable to believe you and senior Administration officials would

have at some point been personally briefed by Ambassador Stevens, given the high-profile nature of our bilateral relationship and significant challenges facing the Libyan people and government, as well as our national interests in Libya. Your public remarks on October 22, 2012 focused on the merits of democratic transition in Libya, which are widely supported in Congress, but you did not take the opportunity to discuss whether you were aware of the rising trend in militias and other security problems the country team was monitoring. When was the last time you were briefed by Ambassador Stevens about the evolving security and political situation in Libya? Did he make any direct observations or raise any concerns to you or your staff about the security situation in country?

- There are reports that military options and assets were offered to and considered by the White House during and in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack. Can you explain what options were presented to you or your staff, and why it appears assets were not allowed to be pre-positioned, let alone utilized? If these reports are accurate, the artificial constraint on the range of options at your disposal would be deeply troubling.

- The National Security Council staff receives significant amounts of raw information and intelligence from throughout the government on a daily basis, and significant and urgent items are flagged for senior White House policymakers. It is clear that information now in the public domain contradicts how you and senior Administration officials consistently described the cause and nature of the terrorist attack in the days and weeks immediately following. Why did the Administration fail to account for facts that were known at the time? I also request that you explain how the Administration's policy response has shifted now that it is publicly acknowledging the attack as an act of terrorism and not a result of an escalating protest against an internet video.

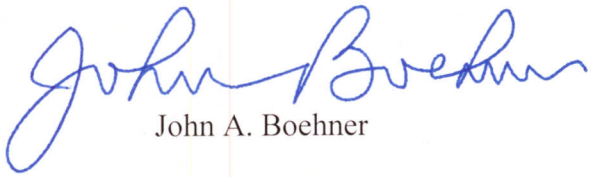
- Many Americans are frustrated and alarmed to read news that agencies appear to have better access to the site of the attack and to individuals of interest than the Administration. House Republicans have consistently expressed concern with your preference for a law enforcement response to acts of terrorism, and news reports have documented the limits of and the missed opportunities by insisting the response to the attack be handled as a criminal investigation. The American people deserve to know how your Administration is re-adjusting its response on this critical point, as well as how you intend to handle the detainment and interviews of persons of interest.

- During your public appearance on October 22, 2012, you asked your fellow Americans to be mindful of the public expressions of support for the United States and outrage regarding the attacks by many Libyans. The House of Representatives was and is grateful for that public support. At the same time, public sentiment cannot substitute for

the political willingness and capacity of any government to assist the United States in achieving its national security objectives. Given the public documentation of the limits of what the Libyan government can do, it is important for you to address whether you would be willing to take actions on behalf of United States national security interests unilaterally when there is a lack of will or capacity by our partners.

Mr. President, our country will not be able to move on from the tragedy of September 11, 2012 until the public better understands the answers to these key questions and concerns. I request you publicly address the public regarding these issues as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



John A. Boehner