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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

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September 17, 2012

The Honorable Thomas Nides
Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

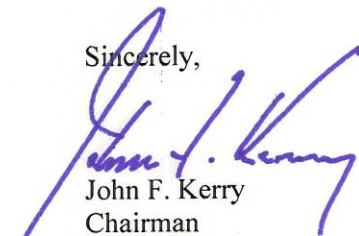
Dear Deputy Secretary Nides:

I am writing with regard to the recent attacks against United State diplomatic and consular facilities in the Middle East. All of us who had the pleasure of working with Ambassador Christopher Stevens are devastated by his loss and the loss of the three other State Department personnel who were doing their duty. I offer my condolences to their families and the State Department community.

We know you are engaged in a process of examining the attacks and determining what happened. It is through this process that we will gain an understanding of what, if anything, can be done to better protect U.S. personnel serving abroad. I appreciate that the Department has actively reached out to me and other members of Congress to brief us in the initial aftermath of the attack in Benghazi. In addition to these briefings, I would like to request that you provide the Foreign Relations Committee with responses to the questions set out in the attachment to this letter so that we may better understand the nature of the attacks, the immediate U.S. and host government responses, and any steps that can be taken to better protect U.S. personnel.

I look forward to receiving your response and to continue working with the Department on this matter. It is critical to the Committee, as I am sure it is to you, that we do everything in our power to protect U.S. personnel and missions abroad.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
Chairman
U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Please provide a detailed accounting of the attacks on U.S. missions in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen on September 11, 2012.

Did the United States or the host government have intelligence prior to the attacks in Egypt, Libya, or Yemen?

Were host government security forces of adequate size to protect our missions in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen? Were the host government security forces adequately trained and equipped?

Please assess the response of U.S. diplomatic security personnel and U.S. marines located at the missions in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen to the attacks.

Please assess the level of cooperation of the governments of Egypt, Libya, and Yemen with regard to the investigations of the attacks and efforts to identify and bring to justice those responsible.

What, if any, changes would you recommend to existing security practices for U.S. personnel and missions abroad to avoid future incidents similar to the attacks in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen?