

## **Statement of Mark Sullivan Select Committee on Benghazi**

Good morning, Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of this committee, thank you for asking Todd Keil and I to appear before you today.

Mr. Chairman, I consider it an honor to have served on the Best Practices Panel with outstanding and dedicated individuals. Our team of Todd Keil, Richard Manlove, Raymond Mislock, Jr., Timothy Murphy and staff, Erica Lichliter and Stephanie Murdoch share a combined experience of 175 years of security and law enforcement expertise.

During our careers each panel member gained an appreciation and understanding of the importance of having clear lines of leadership in an organizational structure concerning security matters. We as a panel also understand that things don't always go as planned. And, when they don't, it is vital to implement lessons learned in an effort to prevent them from happening again.

The panel report reflects the independent views of the panel based upon the members best professional judgment, experience and analysis of the best practices informed by interviews, travel and extensive research.

It was a pleasure to serve with this dedicated group and I appreciate their professionalism and hard work. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all those interviewed in the course of drafting this report from the U.S. Government, private sector, international organizations and foreign governments.

The best practice panel was the result of the Accountability Review Board for Benghazi, which recommended that the Department of State establish a panel of outside independent experts with experience in high risk, high threat areas to support the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, identify best practices and recommendations from other agencies and countries and evaluate United States security platforms in high risk, high threat posts.

Our report provided 40 recommendations in 12 different areas. The 12 areas of recommendations are:

- Organization and management
- Accountability
- Risk management
- Program criticality and acceptable risks
- Planning and logistics
- Lessons learned
- Training and human resources
- Intelligence

- Threat analysis and security assessments
- Programs resources and technology
- Host nations and guard forces capability enhancement
- Regular evaluation and change management
- Leadership
- Communications and training.

It was the opinion of the panel all 40 recommendations would further strengthen the Department's ability to protect its personnel and work more safely on a global platform to achieve American foreign policy goals and objectives. The panels view was that its recommendations were realistic, achievable and measureable.

On August 29, 2013 the panel delivered its final report to the Department of State. Of the 40 recommendations we offered, the Department accepted 38. Of the 38 accepted recommendations, the Department of State has reported that 30 have been implemented. In addition, the implementation process for the remaining 8 is ongoing.

The two recommendations not accepted are: (1) The Department should, as a matter of urgency, establish an Under Secretary for Diplomatic Security and (13) Waivers to establish security standards should only be provided subsequent to the implementation of mitigating measures as agreed by regional bureau or other program managers, advised by Department of State, and as informed by the Department risk management model.

The best practices panel looked across a wide spectrum of private and non-governmental organizations to identify effective measures to enhance the Departments ability to ensure a safe and secure environment for employees and programs.

Not surprisingly, the panel found that many institutions including governments refer to the Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security as the gold standard for security and seek to model their services after the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Nevertheless, any organization must continuously evolve and improve to adjust with a fluid and dynamic environment.

The panel continues to advocate that the way forward should be characterized by cooperative efforts that will provide a framework which will enhance the Department's ability to protect Americans. In order to be effective we must be innovative so that we ensure institutions adapt and evolve to meet the ever changing security requirements and needs.

In any environment where uncertainty permeates, one certainty we share is the necessary collaborative effort that is needed in our country to ensure the safety and security of all American lives. It is also a necessary certainty that we honor and protect the memories of those citizens who have been lost as a result of violent attacks with dignity and respect.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of State, the overseas posts that hosted panel visits and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security for the outstanding support they provided to our panel during our endeavor.

I would also like to thank Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Cummings and members of this Select Committee for inviting us today and your continued efforts to make America safe. We look forward to any questions you may have.