

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

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Good morning Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished Committee members. Thank you for inviting me to appear again today to provide you with an update on the Department of State's progress since September to implement the recommendations made by the independent Benghazi Accountability Review Board (ARB). The Department has made tremendous progress on the 29 independent Benghazi ARB recommendations. To date, we have closed 25 recommendations (including three since our last hearing). The remaining four are in progress or nearing completion.

Keeping U.S. personnel overseas safe is an ongoing, evolving process defined by proactive planning and responsive improvements. The ARB and its recommendations have made an important and valuable contribution in this regard, but I would also like to acknowledge my co-panelist Inspector General Steve Linick, who plays an important role in identifying ways that the Department can improve security. Inspector General Linick and the OIG staff have reviewed our implementation of the Benghazi ARB's recommendations and will be coming back this January to update their review.

It is important to put security and the risks our diplomats face in context. We live in an ever more dangerous world, and often U.S. foreign policy demands that we send our people to carry out important missions in places that are unstable and perilous. Often the places where our presence is needed most are those in which it can be most dangerous to operate. The Department works every day to mitigate the risks that are inherent in the diplomatic work that we ask our people to do. But we can never eliminate risk entirely.

The public is familiar with places like Beirut, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and now Benghazi where American lives were lost. The Department lives with their legacies every day; those were our colleagues. People may be less familiar with Cairo, Sana'a, Tunis, Herat, and Khartoum – places where the Department's security policies and personnel repelled attacks. They may not know of places like Bangui and Gaziantep, where our new risk management policies are helping us safely reopen or launch new posts.

These success stories can be credited, at least in part, to the Department's commitment to learning and incorporating the lessons learned from tragedies like Benghazi into our policies and procedures. Starting with the Inman building program in the 1980s, and continuing today following ARB recommendations, the Department has demonstrated this commitment by adjusting policies, expanding

training, and marshaling more resources, particularly to our most dangerous posts. To put it simply, the ARB process has saved lives.

In our dangerous world, we know we will not stop every attack. But we do everything we can to reduce the risks facing our diplomats each and every day. Today, our personnel go abroad with more training than ever, to posts that are better secured than ever. For example:

- **Training:** Foreign Affairs Counter-Threat (FACT) training has expanded to all high-threat, high-risk posts. We have also begun a systematic process to expand this training over the next few years to *all* Foreign Service personnel and certain other employees under Chief of Mission authority regardless of a post's threat level. Throughout the week-long course, our officers learn security and life safety skills, such as defensive driving techniques, emergency first aid, how to respond to an attack using fire as a weapon, and how to recognize the signs of an impending attack and to react accordingly.
- **Host Nation Support:** In 2014, we created the Special Program for Embassy Augmentation and Response (SPEAR) Program. SPEAR enhances the security of high-threat, high-risk posts by providing training and loaned equipment to host nation security forces that are assigned to respond to emergencies at U.S. diplomatic facilities, but who otherwise could be inadequately trained or equipped to perform that mission effectively. SPEAR is not a one-time training program, but is expected to become a long-term engagement with the goal of institutionalizing the host nation's enhanced capability for U.S. diplomatic community security.
- **Department of Defense Support:** From augmenting security when the situation warrants to providing support if we must temporarily relocate personnel, we continue to collaborate closely with our partners at the Department of Defense. Before 2012, there were only one to two Marine Security Guard Detachment activations per year, after an 18-24 month activation process. I am pleased to report today that we have established 19 new detachments in just a two-year timespan.

Each of these represent the Department's broader commitment to giving the foreign affairs community the training, resources, and support needed to keep our

personnel safe as they protect America's national security, promote our economic prosperity, and advance America's global leadership.

As you asked in September, the Department provided a written progress summary on ARB implementation within 45 days of that hearing. I am here to provide the Committee today with an additional update on the Department's progress in implementing the Benghazi ARB's recommendations.

I am pleased to report that we have made progress since September. Since then, the Permanent Coordinating Committee, on which I sit, met to conduct its annual review of all ARB recommendations. We continue to work closely with the Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources to ensure we maintain constant focus on these critical recommendations at the highest levels of the Department, along with the Under Secretaries for Political Affairs and Management, and other offices and bureaus. I look forward to providing you with details about where we stand. In doing so, I am mindful that there is still work to be done and that the Committee, as well as the Inspector General's office, may have suggestions about how to do even better. We welcome your input. Indeed, the Department shares an interest with the Committee to ensure that we learn the lessons from attacks like those in Benghazi.

As I mentioned, since the hearing in September, the Department closed three more Benghazi ARB recommendations, bringing our total to 25 out of 29 recommendations. We closed Recommendation 12, which concerns hiring additional personnel into the Diplomatic Security Bureau. All 151 new positions have been created and funded, and we anticipate completing the interview and hiring process in early 2015. We also closed Recommendation 17 based on the Department's progress in instituting mandatory Foreign Affairs Counter Threat training for high threat, high risk posts, and creating a joint Foreign Service Institute and Diplomatic Security standing working group to develop joint risk management courses. Recommendation 18 has also been closed. We have procured and installed photo-luminescent directional tape and signage for safe havens and building exits at all of our high-threat, high-risk posts. We also affirmed compliance with fire safety/security equipment in safe havens and safe areas located in non-Inman/SECCA facilities and in high-threat Inman facilities. Furthermore, we have delivered the recommended fire safety equipment to all but one high-threat, high-risk post, with that final delivery pending resolution of a customs issue.

Only four Benghazi ARB recommendations remain open, and we are actively working to close them. For example, in response to Recommendation 7, the Department conducted a review of all overseas facilities to assess whether co-location waivers are required when co-location is not an option. We anticipate completing the waiver process soon. For Recommendation 13, we have increased the assignment lengths for personnel assigned to high-threat, high-risk posts. Although that achieves the letter of the ARB's recommendation, in order to ensure that we can assign the most qualified personnel, the Department continues to seek authority from Congress to waive salary and annuity limitations that will enable us to keep experienced individuals assigned to our most critical posts. For Recommendation 20, the Department has confirmed that Washington can already monitor all high-threat, high-risk posts through surveillance cameras, and continues to install upgraded camera technology. We expect to complete all the equipment upgrades by mid-2016. We are prioritizing upgrades for the posts that need the technology most. Finally, classified Recommendation 5 remains open. The Department is addressing this recommendation as part of its construction plan. We can provide you additional details in an appropriate setting.

The closure of 25 out of the 29 Benghazi ARB recommendations reflects a tremendous amount of progress. The Department has achieved quantifiable goals and has institutionalized important changes to how we conduct our operations. We take the ARB's recommendations seriously and will not close them until it is appropriate to do so. Indeed, as outlined in the Department's October 30, 2014 letter to the Committee, we are holding open several recommendations from past ARBs based on a sober assessment of where we stand. There is more work to do and the entire Department is committed to getting it done.

As we continue our discussion, I believe we also owe it to our diplomats, along with our security professionals, in the field and our personnel who support them from home to acknowledge that their efforts are appreciated, that their work to further U.S. foreign policy is a success, and that we will continue doing everything we can to support and protect them.

In closing, I would like to return to a discussion of risk and diplomacy. Today, the overall threat that the foreign affairs community faces is magnitudes greater in size and complexity than that we experienced a few decades ago. But as the threats have evolved, so have our security protocols. The United States cannot retreat from its work. Diplomacy must persist and is essential to our nation's security. Like you, we want to keep our people safe. I will be happy to answer your questions at this time.