

Chairwoman Kay Granger
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations
Embassy Security Hearing
February 14, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

The Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs will come to order.

I want to start by welcoming all of the Subcommittee Members to the first hearing of the 113th Congress. Today we will address one of the most urgent issues in the Subcommittee's jurisdiction -- how best to protect United States diplomatic and development personnel serving overseas. I particularly want to thank our witness this morning, Patrick Kennedy, who currently serves as Undersecretary for Management at the Department of State and has 40 years of experience as a member of the Foreign Service.

We have taken the extraordinary step to close the hearing today so that we can discuss more freely the threat environment and the strategies and measures in place to mitigate those threats.

Tragedies such as the murder of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Libya, the destructive demonstrations at posts across Africa, to the death and injury of security personnel in Turkey just two weeks ago are a stark reminder that the security environment is more challenging than it has ever been.

The investment by our Committee of more than \$10 billion since fiscal year 2000 has led to the completion of 97 new facilities and provided more than 27,000 diplomats and development personnel with safer facilities. We have taken requests from the Department of State for Embassy Security very seriously and have left it to the security experts to determine the right balance to meet the Department's needs. As a result, this Committee does not appropriate for specific facilities, designate the type of equipment used, or limit the number of staff. The Committee also gives the Department the authority to reprogram and transfer funds when there is some tragedy, like Benghazi, that requires funds to be moved around.

However, the events of the last several months illustrate all too well that the threat environment has changed since the State Department developed its policies and procedures after the bombings of the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August of 1998. These events require us to re-examine all aspects of embassy security, including security systems, facility standards and procedures, intelligence collection, threat analysis, and personnel performance.

Last week, Chairman Rogers and I sent a letter to Secretary Kerry asking him to address these issues as an urgent priority. We noted that this is a national security challenge far too important to address with a piecemeal approach. We called for a comprehensive plan with timelines and budgets that incorporates the recommendations of the Benghazi Accountability Review Board, inter-agency assessment teams, and any State Department reviews.

In the meantime, this Committee stands ready to work with you to understand the Department's needs and to try to find the resources to address them in this very difficult budget environment.

I will now turn to Mrs. Lowey for her opening remarks and then to Chairman Rogers.

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