HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

April 23, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Five Committees of the House of Representatives continue to inquire into the terrorist attacks on U.S. interests in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, resulting in the deaths of four Americans. Key issues in this investigation are (1) who denied requests for additional security to U.S. personnel on the ground in Benghazi; and (2) why the Administration decided to communicate to the American people that the attacks were a spontaneous demonstration inspired by a YouTube video, rather than explaining the likely al-Qa'ida affiliation of those responsible.

After many requests, the State Department provided the House Committees on Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Government Reform restricted access to State Department cables denying requests for additional security. An April 19, 2012, cable bearing Secretary Clinton's signature acknowledged requests for additional security, but nevertheless ordered the withdrawal of security assets to proceed as planned (12 State 38939). Similarly, after many requests, Administration officials finally provided members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) access to draft versions of the talking points used by Ambassador Susan Rice on five morning news shows on September 16, 2012, and email traffic leading up to the final version of those talking points. After review of those emails, it is clear to HPSCI members that the talking points were altered to withhold key information about the terrorist attacks, the likely al-Qa'ida connections, and the previous attacks on western interests in eastern Libya. Contrary to public statements by Administration officials, the talking points were not altered in the interagency process to protect classified information or to protect the FBI investigation. Rather, the talking points were altered to protect those senior Administration officials who failed to make appropriate security decisions. Administration officials did not allow the Committees to retain these documents.

Given the gravity of this issue, we request that you immediately make the April 19, 2012, State Department cable public. Further, given the oversight obligations of each Committee investigating these events, we request that you immediately provide the emails and all versions of the talking points to the House Committees on Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, Oversight and Government Reform, Judiciary, and Intelligence. Finally, we ask that all documents and communications previously provided for *in camera* review be immediately turned over to our Committees. Access to this information cannot be dictated by the political interests of the Executive Branch. Each of our Committees has a duty to determine responsibility for the decisions to endanger Americans and to mislead the American people following this deadly terrorist attack against our country.

Sincerely,

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services

Mike Rogers
Chairman
Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence

Ed Royce
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs

Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary

Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform