

Fact Sheet: HASC Oversight Activities on Libya

The outline below reflects an overview of HASC oversight activities and conclusions on the attack that occurred in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012.

Hearings and Briefings:

- **September 12, 2012:** HASC Staff classified briefing on weapons of mass destruction in Libya.
- **September 19, 2012:** Full Committee hearing on the attack in Benghazi.
- **October 18, 2012:** HASC Staff classified intelligence and operations briefing on the attack in Benghazi.
- **November 16, 2012:** Participated in Department of Defense briefing to House Members.
- **November 20, 2012:** HASC Staff classified intelligence and operations briefing on the attack in Benghazi.
- **November 29, 2012:** Full Committee classified briefing on the attack in Benghazi.
- **February 6, 2013:** Full Committee classified briefing on intelligence and operations in North and East Africa.

Other Activities:

- Systematic monitoring of intelligence traffic and multiple calls with Department of Defense officials.
- HASC Member fact sheets.
- HASC staff briefings and discussions with outside experts.
- HASC Chairman letters to GEN Ham, GEN Dempsey and VADM Tidd, ADM McRaven, and LTG Flynn (October 17, 2012).
- HASC Chairman letter to the President (October 29, 2012).

Conclusions Drawn:

- The U.S. military rapid response assets were not postured to respond before the attacks on the annex and the compounded ended.
- U.S. Africa Command did not (and still does not) have a fully constituted special operations unit, similar to what other Combatant Command have, with critical enabling assets. Instead, during the attack in Benghazi, Libya, the U.S. Africa Command was relying on additional special operations forces from U.S. European Command – who were engaged in an exercise in Croatia at the time of the attack.
- The Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Teams (FAST) platoons in Rota, Spain did not have dedicated air lift in the same location – rather, it was in Germany.
- The U.S. government postured its assets and established its force protection based upon specific intelligence of a pending attack – and may not have sufficiently factored in the political context or historic importance of Libya to jihadists.
- Questionable assessment by the intelligence community of the organization of the initial attack on the compound.
- Flawed assumptions underpinning the assessment of the status of al-Qaeda and its affiliates in Libya and the region.

Outstanding Questions:

- Status of the Ali Ani Harzi, an individual who was detained in October 2012 in Turkey and then released in Tunisia on January 8, 2012.
- Access to detainees in Libya and Egypt, intelligence collected, and current disposition of the FBI investigation.
- Explanation for the risk accepted – as reflected through the U.S. military and State Department posture in Libya – given the historic importance and activities of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and al-Qaeda associated groups in Libya.
- The precise nature of the intelligence, if any, that was lost.

Lessons Learned and Impact on National Policies:

- U.S. Africa Command needs to have a fully capable special operations unit, similar to what other Combatant Commands have, fully postured outside the continental United States.
- The policymakers should evaluate whether they are sufficiently considering not only actionable intelligence of a pending attack but also the current security landscape, the political and historic context, and the relative import of a particular location / region.
- The al-Qaeda / global jihadist narrative is evolving in unique ways such that it continues to have resonance within certain politically charged and social uncertain contexts. U.S. policymakers should re-evaluate our assumptions about al-Qaeda and the global jihad.
- Given the current fiscal and budgetary environment, the military likely is not able to maintain the readiness to respond quickly to similar crises and, thereby, is unlikely to address the issues that the HASC has identified.
- The Administration does not appear to have a policy that secures U.S. interests in the region by comprehensively addressing the evolving nature of the al-Qaeda threat, its interplay with the regional dynamics within the context of the Arab Spring, and the resourcing required for the military to address those threats.

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**Courtesy of the House Armed Services Committee
Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.), Chairman**