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**To:** HPSCI Republican Staff; Jepson; Kristin; Rogers; Mike J.  
**Subject:** Rogers Oped in The Hill - The House Intelligence Committee's report on Benghazi



## **The House Intelligence Committee's report on Benghazi**

By Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.)

12/10/14

The Obama administration's White House and State Department actions before, during, and after the Benghazi terrorist attack on September 11, 2012, ranged from incompetence to deplorable political manipulation in the midst of an election season.

Intelligence does not provide us with a crystal ball, it provides us with clues. In this case, those clues indicated that constant planning and coordination were underway that made it very likely there would be an attack on U.S. interests. The State Department ignored numerous, consistent intelligence warnings about the threat environment in Benghazi and was woefully unprepared to operate in a high threat environment like Benghazi. The State Department should have considered the risks associated with terrorists' intent to capitalize on the 9/11 anniversary.

For months after the attacks, senior White House officials, including President Obama, grossly misled the American people about what happened and why. I believe that they did this to further their own inaccurate view that they had al Qa'ida "on the run"; and with an election looming they did not want to be responsible for a terrorist attack on their watch. It is important to note that the Obama administration has still not brought all of the Benghazi perpetrators to justice. That is a fact that serves only to embolden our enemies.

Over the course of the investigation, the Committee conducted 114 oversight activities, including hearings, meetings, and briefings. We held 19 member oversight events in pursuit of the truth on Benghazi - more events than on any other single issue within the Committee's jurisdiction, including Iran, al Qai'da, Syria, Russia, China, Afghanistan, the NSA, or nuclear proliferation.

The Committee sought to identify findings based on the totality of information that was available: time-stamped overhead video footage, other video images, eyewitness testimony taken under oath, FBI investigative information, testimony from experts experienced in tactical responses in situations similar to Benghazi, interviews and testimony from the CIA chain of command, testimony of security contractors who are publicly promoting a book about their experience, security contractors who were present and are still working under cover around the world for the US, and thousands of classified CIA communications and other intelligence community documents surrounding the attack.

Each finding is based on all the information available and corroborated by more than one source. As an FBI agent who has worked investigations of bombings, murders, shootings, extortions, and bank robberies, I know testimony from multiple eyewitnesses regarding the same event will differ and sometimes change with time. Using other sources' testimony is the best way to corroborate and reconcile conflicting eyewitness accounts. This is a tried and true method for establishing as best as possible the timeline and actions of multiple individuals in a high adrenaline, chaotic environment like combat. That is exactly what the Committee's report, which was unanimously approved by voice vote, reflects.

The report has disappointed some and infuriated others. I was taught when an FBI Special Agent in Chicago, if someone loves your investigation it's best to start over. No one loves this report. Why? The push for politically slanted opinions and interpretations has been intense -- from both Republicans and Democrats. In fact, one of my greatest frustrations about Congress is members on both sides who don't do their homework, form an opinion, and then rush to the microphones.

Some have said the report exonerates the State Department and White House. It does not. Others have said it does not include interviews with key eyewitnesses from the Department of Defense and the State Department. It does not, but only because those are not witnesses that fall within the Intelligence Committee's jurisdiction.

Many argued for a more politically charged report -- for either exoneration or damnation. That is not the role of the Intelligence Committee or the report. The Committee's role was to answer the questions regarding the actions of the IC surrounding the events of Benghazi and to make determinations of possible criminal wrongdoing or other malfeasance. The findings and supporting evidence, much of which remains classified and has not been read by the media, speak for themselves.

Our report lays the groundwork for the Benghazi Select Committee, which I voted to create, to pursue vigorously the many unanswered questions about the Obama White House and State Department actions to finally get to the truth on those issues. The Intelligence Committee's fact-based investigation will pave the way for that work.

*Rogers has represented Michigan's 8th Congressional District since 2001. He is chairman of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.*

Link to Oped: <http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/226635-the-house-intelligence-committees-report-on-benghazi>