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BENGHAZI: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

MODERATOR:

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PANELISTS:

CONGRESSMAN FRANK WOLF (VA – 10)

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TOM FITTON: I'm Tom Fitton. I'm president of Judicial Watch. And welcome to our special panel on unanswered questions in the Benghazi matter.

Judicial Watch is a conservative non-partisan educational foundation dedicated to transparency, integrity and accountability in government, politics, and the law. Through our educational activities, we advocate high standards of ethics and morality in our nation's public life and seek to ensure that the political classes do not abuse the public trust given them by the American people. Judicial Watch does not endorse or oppose candidates for public office.

Wednesday marks two anniversaries: both the 12th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks of 2001, and, relatedly, the one-year anniversary of the Benghazi terrorist attack that saw the murders of four fine Americans – Ambassador Christopher Stevens, U.S. Foreign Service Specialist Sean Smith, and former Navy SEALs Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods. Stevens was the first ambassador killed in the line of duty since the 1979 shooting of Ambassador Adolph Dubs in Afghanistan.

Our esteemed panel is to provide details of the scandal, the Benghazi scandal that has seen unprecedented lying by our government about the attack, lying, in my view, to help this president's reelection campaign at the time.

Joining us here – before I begin, before we get into the discussion of the panel, we see unprecedented political and public opposition to the Syrian intervention, at least as proposed by President Obama. And, in my view, it's unprecedented because of the lack of trust of this administration by Benghazi. And I hope we're able to discuss that today because, obviously, Syria is the cloud hanging over political discussions in Washington these days. And Benghazi can't be separated from the debate on Syria in many ways. And we'll talk about that later.

From Judicial Watch's perspective though, we've seen an unprecedented stonewall of our nearly two dozen Freedom of Information Act requests about Benghazi. We've had to sue four times for basic information about the Benghazi attack. By way of example, it took six months and a federal lawsuit just to obtain a few State Department photos showing some of the aftermath of the attack on the Benghazi special mission compound.

And here we are, one year after the attack, and there's been zero accountability. No military action, no drones, no arrests. No one has been fired from the Obama administration for its lies or a malfeasance.

We're lucky to be joined by two individuals who have taken lead roles, thankfully, in trying to demand accountability on Benghazi.

Representative Frank Wolf is a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee. He's chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees the Justice Department budget, including the FBI.

He's the author of legislation creating the National Commission on Terrorism, also known as the Bremer Commission. He introduced the legislation in September of 1998, a few weeks after two U.S. embassies in Africa were bombed, killing 244 people and injuring more than 5,000. He mentioned Osama bin Laden in his remarks associated with setting up this commission. And, of course, the commission delivered its final report in June 2000.

And, in 2014, Wolf has included funding for comprehensive external review of the FBI's implementation, FBI related recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. So it's good to know that someone is paying attention and make sure that 10 years, 12 years later, we're finally implementing some of the recommendations, or at least all of them, of the 9/11 Commission. And it also requires the FBI to study the potential for terrorist finance operations, both domestically and abroad, including economic attacks of any kind and to identify what preparations are in place to mitigate such an attack.

And, Wolf, as you'll learn here today, is also the author of H. Res. 36, which would create a House select committee to investigate the Benghazi matter. He also, in my view, has taken the lead on this quite literally. In July, he went to the floor of the House almost every day to ask a question of the day about what happened in Benghazi. So we're really lucky to have him here today to update us on his efforts and to raise even more questions.

And also joining us is Chris Farrell, who's my colleague and director of our investigations and research at Judicial Watch. And he's also a member, of course, of our board of directors. He was a distinguished military graduate from Fordham University, with a B.A. in history, former Army military intelligence officer specializing in counter-intel and human intelligence.

He has pursued additional grad studies and national security studies specializing in unconventional warfare and terrorism. He served as senior staff associate of Columbia University's National Center for Disaster Preparedness, the Mailman School of Public Health. He is a member of the Association of Former Intel Officers, the American Society of Access Professionals, and the International Counterterrorism Officers Association, and a constituent member of the State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Committee.

Chris serves as Judicial Watch's also main representative to the United Nations headquarters in New York. And Chris personally oversaw Judicial Watch's unprecedented investigation of the Benghazi matter, and also was the chief author of our phenomenal special report on it. It titled "Unanswered Questions and the Quest for Accountability from the Obama Administration." So Chris will detail new disclosures that we have as a result of our investigations and lawsuits.

And once Mr. Wolf and once Mr. Farrell make their presentation, we'll try to open up the floor to questions.

So with that being said, I turn it over to Congressman Wolf, who – before I turn it over to you, I would – I want to also give you special recognition for your efforts on behalf of religious liberty. If anyone has followed this issue, they should know that Congressman Wolf has been a phenomenal leader in that regard and has spoken for the voiceless in ways that our corrupt Washington culture has simply left behind. So, personally, I really appreciate your work in that regard as well, Congressman. That being said, back to Benghazi.

REPRESENTATIVE FRANK WOLF (R-VA): OK. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your comments. I want to thank Judicial Watch for hosting today's event as we mark the one-year anniversary, and, also I think it's very appropriate, the anniversary of 9/9/11. There were about 180 some people from my district who died in the attack on the Pentagon. And so I think also that will be an anniversary that we will never, ever, ever forget, but this week, the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attack against the U.S. Consulate and the CIA annex in Benghazi attacks, which were themselves launched on the 11th year anniversary of 9/11.

Judicial Watch has done such important work along with a number of other groups I've had the privilege of working with to advance the investigation into the Benghazi attacks.

Frankly, these outside groups are doing the work that Congress has failed – has failed to do to uncover what really happened that night. That is why I've been pushing for a House select committee for the last 10 months to dedicate the time and resources to a robust congressional investigation.

Over the course of the three weeks leading up to the August recess, I went down to the House for nearly every day to raise a series of questions that remain unanswered despite nearly a year of siloed investigation by five separate House committees. These (12th floor ?) statements are available on my website at wolf.house.gov/Benghazi.

When you look at the list of unanswered questions, it is startling how little, how little progress has been made in this investigation over the last past year. It also demonstrates the failure of the Congress to fulfill its oversight responsibilities.

Some may ask why the continued focus on Benghazi a year later, especially when there are so many new issues facing the new Congress. I believe there are three key reasons to continue to push for a select committee to hold public hearings, to issue subpoenas, and to report the truth about what happened to the American people.

The first of our obligation is to the families of those killed and seriously wounded survivors who fought alongside Ty Woods and Glen Doherty to save so many American

lives that night. A grave injustice was committed against them when the determination was made not to send any aid or assistance over an eight-hour period of fighting. That injustice is only magnified when the sacrifice is not acknowledged and the story is not told.

To date, we only know the name of one of these brave survivors, Diplomatic Security Agent Dave Ubben, who has spent the last year – and is still there – last year undergoing multiple surgeries at Walter Reed Bethesda Hospital. But he is not alone. Others were wounded. The story of how a handful of brave Americans fought off hundreds of armed terrorists has yet to fully come out. Do we not owe it to these men to credit them for their heroic acts?

The second reason is Benghazi embodies, embodies why the American people are losing confidence in the government, both in the executive branch's failure to assist those under fire that night as well as the legislative branch's failure to obtain answers or to hold individuals accountable.

Third is that it is increasingly apparent the U.S. acts in Benghazi since 2011 have had a strong connection with U.S. policy toward assisting the Syrian rebels. Many of these rebels are now (undoubtedly ?) al Qaeda connected affiliates, including those that may have participated in the attack on the consulate and the CIA annex in Benghazi.

In light of the evidence that has emerged following attacks, I firmly believe that whatever the State Department and CIA were doing in Benghazi had a direct connection to U.S. policy in Syria, a policy that to date has not been fully revealed to the American people or, quite frankly, to Congress.

While troubling in isolation, it is all the more important so in light of the president's request to Congress this week to authorize military intervention in Syria. How can this conversation advance in a responsible manner without clarity about what transpired that night in Benghazi?

Two weeks ago, respected national security reporter Bill Gertz wrote in a "Washington Free Beacon" that, quote, "U.S. intelligence agencies earlier this month uncovered new evidence that al Qaeda linked terrorists in Benghazi are training foreign jihadists to fight with Syria's Islamist rebels, according to U.S. officials. Ansar al-Sharia, the al Qaeda linked militia that U.S. officials said orchestrated the September 11 attacks on the U.S. diplomatic compound and the CIA facility in Benghazi, is running several training camps for jihadists in Benghazi and nearby Darnah, another port city further east, officials said," end of quote.

The article went on to say, quote, "At the time of their arrest, the Tunisians stated that they were trained in small arms use and they were on their way to join Syrian rebels by traveling first to Benghazi, then Istanbul and overland across Turkey into northern Syria." I also noted that, quote, "U.S. intelligence agencies believe Libya has produced more jihadist rebels for the Syrian conflict than any other outside nation."

Continue to quote: “Some 20 percent of foreign jihadists in Syria came from Libya and several hundred are currently in the country.” Continue to quote: “Over 100 Libyans were reported killed in Syria fighting for such rebel groups as the al-Nusra front, the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant, Umma Brigade, the Ahrar al-Sham, an al-Nusra offshoot.”

U.S. involvement in weapons collection in Benghazi goes back even further.

The “National Journal” reported back in 2011 that, quote, “The U.S. is planning to ramp up spending to help Libya’s interim government secure and destroy the shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles and weapons looted from Gaddafi’s stockpiles. A senior State Department official said Clinton will tell Libyan leaders that the U.S. contribution to these efforts will go up to 40 million (dollars),” end of quote. The same article noted that, quote, “The U.S. has already spent six million (dollars) on its unconventional weapons disposal efforts, sending a quick reaction force or weapon experts to Libya by October 2011.”

It is particularly noteworthy that during the same time period the U.S. was engaged in collecting weapons in Libya, respected national security reporter Mark Hosenball, on August 1st of 2012, wrote, quote, that “President Barack Obama signed a secret order authorizing U.S. support for rebels seeking to depose Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his government. U.S. sources familiar with the matter said Obama’s order approved earlier this year, and known as an intelligence finding, broadly permits the CIA and other U.S. agencies to provide support that could help the rebels oust Assad,” end of quote.

The article goes on to say, the White House is for now apparently stopping short of giving the rebels lethal weapons even as some U.S. allies do just that. And precisely when Obama signed the secret intelligence authorization, an action not previously reported, could not be determined.”

However, Hosenball also reports that following information: “A U.S. government source acknowledged that under provisions of the presidential finding, the United States was collaborating with a secret command center operated by Turkey and its allies.”

And NBC say, quote, “The shoulder-fired missiles, also known as MANPADs, have been delivered to the rebels via Turkey,” end of quote.

Is it possible that the president’s intelligence finding included an authorization for the weapons collected in Libya to be transferred to Syrian rebels? Was the CIA annex in Benghazi being used to facilitate these transfers? I believe there’s now enough evidence suggesting this, that it demands a clear explanation.

Last month, the “Washington Examiner” Susan Crabtree reported on comments made by an attorney for one of the Benghazi whistleblowers, suggesting that as many as

400 surface-to-air missiles were stolen by terrorists in the attack on the U.S. facilities in Benghazi last year.

Crabtree also noted that although State Department Spokesman Marie Harf, in a comment on the matter of the stolen weapons, quote, “Harf said the U.S. has devoted 400 million (dollars) to assist the government of Libya in securing and disabling stockpiles of at-risk conventional weapons and ammunition,” end of quote. I think most everyone would agree that 400 million (dollars) is a sizeable amount of money.

As the senior member of the House Appropriation Committee who served in the subcommittee that funds the State Department and other foreign assistance programs, I sent a letter today to both the president and secretary of state asking the following questions: one, what is the total amount of appropriated funding spent on weapons collection, transfer and destruction since 2011? Under what authority was this funding used?

Two, did the State Department and/or the CIA award contracts to any U.S. or foreign contractor for assistance with the collection, storage, transportation or removal of the collected weapons? If so, what are the names of the contractors? And what is the total value of the contract?

Three, did the U.S. work with any foreign government or agencies in collecting and disposing of these weapons? If so, what foreign government or agencies were involved? And what was their role in the collection process?

Four, were the collected weapons ever held or stored in either the U.S. consulate or CIA annex in Benghazi during the collection process?

Five, did the collected weapons remain in warehouses in Libya or were they transferred to the U.S. or another country for disposal? If so, whose custody were the weapons ultimately transferred to for storage or destruction?

Six, how does the State Department confirm the destruction of these collected weapons? Is it a certification provided to the department?

And, seven, more importantly, at any point in time, were these collected weapons transferred to Syria and were ever obtained by opposition fighters including jihadist fighters?

When Dan and I were out in the region, we were in – in February, we went to Egypt and Lebanon. We went down into Beqaa Valley. We had a number of Syrians come out of Damascus and tell us of the story of the jihadists, and some of the stories. So, you know, at any point, were these collected weapons transferred to Syria and were ever obtained by opposition fighters, including the jihadists?

Questions about these weapons are especially timely in light of a “Wall Street Journal” article, on October 25th, further detailing covert U.S. cooperation with Saudi Arabia to arm Syrian rebels.

According to the article, quote, “Not everyone in the Obama administration is comfortable with an U.S. partnership with the Saudis on Syria. Some officials said they fear it carries the same risk of spinning out of control as an earlier project in which Prince Bandar” – who incidentally used to live in my congressional district – “was involved in the 1980s CIA program of secretly financing the Contras in Nicaragua against a leftist government. The covert program led to criminal convictions for U.S. operatives and international rebukes.” Quote, “This program has the potential to go badly, one former official said, citing the risk weapons will end up in the hands of violent anti-Western extremists.”

And keep in mind, if you read the book “The Looming Tower,” it points out that the Saudis funded all of the Madrasas up on the Afghan-Pakistan border that actually led to 9/11. And if you know who was involved in 9/11, the overwhelming majority were the Saudi. I would not trust Prince Bandar and the Saudis with regard to this.

This article notes that the program was begun amid 2012, and was prior to the Benghazi attack by former CIA Director David Petraeus and has been continued by his successor, John Brennan.

Were these rebels being armed with weapons collected in Benghazi? Again, there’s reason to believe this may be the case and a clear explanation is warranted. That’s why I’m calling for the Congress to hold a public hearing with both former Director Petraeus and current Director Brennan to determine what was going on at the CIA annex in Benghazi and what role it played in the collection and disbursement of weapons collected in Libya, specifically with the focus of trying to understand how the annex may have supported CIA efforts to arm and train Syrian rebels.

This hearing would preferably be held by a select committee, but there’s no reason the House Intelligence Committee cannot hold a public hearing – and if it’s not public, forget about it; if it’s not public, forget about it – with these two men immediately.

Given the pending request for authorization to use military force in Syria, it is more important than ever that the Congress understand U.S. support and assistance to the Syrian rebels. And were the groups responsible for the Americans deaths in Benghazi may have been at the same benefitting from U.S. assistance in Syria?

Before Congress can make an informed decision about military intervention in Syria, Benghazi should be more fully understood as the two are intimately related and may have a direct bearing on U.S. national security.

Unfortunately, transparency has not been the order of the day. The Obama administration has reportedly applied tremendous pressure to silence those survivors along with others who witnessed what happened that night in Benghazi.

As many of you know, on August 1st, CNN reported that, quote, “The CIA is involved in what one source calls an unprecedented attempt to keep the spy agency Benghazi secrets from ever leaking out.”

Since January, some CIA operatives involved in the agency’s mission in Libya have been subjected to frequent, even monthly polygraph examinations according to a source with deep inside knowledge of the agency’s working. The goal of the questioning, according to sources, is to find out if anyone is talking to the media or Congress. It is being described as pure intimidation with the threat that any unauthorized CIA employee who leaks information could face the end of his or her career.

Additionally, according to a trusted source that’s contacted my office, many if not all the survivors of the Benghazi attack, along with others at the Department of Defense and CIA, has been asked or directed to sign additional non-disclosure agreements about their involvement in the Benghazi attacks. Some of these, quote, “new NDAs” – as they call them – I’ve been told were signed as recently as this summer.

Fox News subsequently confirmed that these reports – in an August 2nd article stating, quote, “Fox News has learned that at least five CIA employees were forced to sign additional non-disclosure agreements this past spring in the wake of the Benghazi attacks.” These employees had already signed such agreements before the attack, but were made to sign new agreements aimed at discouraging survivors from leaking their stories to the media or anyone else.

Given the tremendous pressure being brought to keep these people silent, one must ask: what is the administration afraid of? What will the survivors disclosure to the American people if given the opportunity to speak?

Shortly after I delivered a series of floor statements raising unanswered questions about Benghazi, my office received a call from a man saying he knew a CIA employee who has retained legal counsel because he’s refused to sign an additional NDA regarding – a non-disclosure agreement regarding the September 11, 2012, events in Benghazi. I called the law firm, spoke with the CIA employee’s attorney who confirmed that her client is having an issue with the agency and the firm is trying to address it. We offered to help. They said they were going to work through the process. But based on my past experience with the CIA, of course, headquartered in my congressional district, and a number of CIA people go to my church in my neighborhood, I am not at all confident that these efforts will be successful.

Finally, on the eve of the one-year anniversary of the attacks, I’d like to comment on the state of the FBI investigation. It is very telling that despite the full resources for

the U.S. intelligence, defense and law enforcement agencies, we have yet to locate and apprehend and bring to justice any of the suspected terrorists.

As the chairman of the Appropriation Subcommittee that funds the FBI from 2001 to 2006, and, again, since 2011, I have been one of the bureau's strongest supporters in Congress. However, I'm deeply disappointed in both the bureau's failure to make progress and the manner in which this investigation has been used as a cover or as an excuse by the Obama administration officials to refuse to comment on what happened that night.

Even at the beginning – and I won't get into the classified what they said – the first one we had is every question we'd go to, Hillary would say, the others would say, we really cannot comment because the bureau, and the bureau guys at the end, is actively investigating. This is an active investigation. So, therefore, we cannot comment.

Consider that in May, the Associated Press reported that, quote, "The U.S. has identified five men who might be responsible for the attack on the diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, last year and has enough evidence to justify seizing them by military force as suspected terrorists, officials say. But there isn't enough proof to try them in a U.S. civilian court as the Obama administrations prefers. The men remain at large while the FBI gathers evidence." That was in May.

The failure to detain these suspects a year later and nearly five months after they were supposedly identified represents a stunning abdication of responsibility on the part of this administration. When will the FBI be able to gather enough evidence to use in a civilian trial against them if they're denied access by countries because the administration refuses to use the tools of American diplomacy to bring pressure to bear on these countries?

Any crime scene to which law enforcement officials are denied for a day, much less a week, must be considered compromised. And it took a number of days before the bureau got in. And we've seen the story of CNN and others talking to some of these people well before the bureau got on the scene.

There's one very telling example of the administration's failure to bring diplomatic pressure on countries to support the FBI investigation.

Last fall, Tunisians obtained the first suspect in the Benghazi terror attack – Ali Harzi, H-A-R-Z-I – after he was deported from Turkey in the weeks following the attack. Tunisia, despite being the beneficiary of more than \$300 million in U.S. foreign aid – they're actually called a Millennium Challenge Country, meaning they're better than most. They're sort of better, and, because of that, they're going to get more aid and more assistance. They've refused to allow the FBI access to the suspect for nearly five weeks. It was only after congressional threats to cut off the aid that the government of Tunisia reconsidered its position.

Ultimately, the FBI interrogation team returned – after being on the ground for five weeks left – returned to Tunisia and was allowed just three hours to interview Harzi with his lawyer and a Tunisian judge present. Not long after the FBI interview, Harzi was inexplicably released by the Tunisian authorities and his release was celebrated by Ansar al-Sharia terrorists. You can go online. You can see it. They're celebrating. They're hugging and embracing – he's out, he's out.

Consider there for a moment the Tunisian government kept the FBI interrogation team waiting on the ground for weeks before the team ultimately left the country. Only under threat from certain members of the U.S. Congress did Tunisia allow the FBI team to return to interview the suspect for a mere three hours. Then, when the terrorists were released, there was celebration, which I think is shameful.

Because of Tunisian obstruction of the FBI investigation at my request, the House took the first step in July to send a signal to Tunisia and other countries harboring the terrorists responsible for the death of four Americans in Benghazi when the State Department operation appropriation bill carried language cutting aid to Tunisia.

This is an important – and also, I was in – Dan and I were in Egypt in February. I brought a letter to give to Morsi, and asking Morsi to make available to the FBI – there was a legal attaché on the scene – a man who was involved in the attack with information. To date, they have not allowed us to interview him. And, of course, we've given Egypt \$71 billion since the Camp David Accords.

This is an important and overdue step, overdue because the Obama administration could have long ago suspended or terminated its payments to Tunisia or other countries that failed to cooperate with the FBI in this investigation.

Additionally, there's the larger question of whether it is even appropriate, if enough evidence is gathered, to bring the terrorists to the U.S. for civilian trial. Benghazi was a battlefield, not a crime scene. And America lost. Those responsible should face justice as enemy combatants and not common criminals.

Keep in mind, Anwar al-Awlaki, who had a – was in a mosque when he used to be in my congressional district, in Falls Church, now adjoining mine, was an American citizen, went to an American college, if you will, on the taxpayer money. He was killed by a drone in Yemen as well as his son, and yet, these guys who we know have done this, nothing happens.

In closing, just last week, I had the opportunity to speak with a survivor – it was last Tuesday – of the Benghazi attack. I wanted the opportunity to thank him for his service and to get a better sense of the pressure that has been brought against the survivors. They live in fear. They're afraid to come forward. They're afraid to have (the name?). That's why you have to have public hearings and subpoenas, a way to protect the people who come forward.

Because the full story about what happened that night has not been made public, people like those who were on the scene there, who I spoke with, who fought valiantly throughout the night to save scores of American lives, are not receiving the recognition – they’re not receiving the recognition that their country owes them. Instead, their government is intimidating them into silence for reasons that Congress is failing to fully investigate. And I think these men deserve better.

The lack of answered despite a year of investigation in five House committees is inexcusable. It has been nearly six months since the, quote, “interim progress report” on the five committee investigations was released. Will there ever be a final report? And if so, will it answer the questions I and others have raised? Will subpoenas ever be issued to survivors and others in the chain of command to determine why no assistance was sent to Benghazi? Will we ever learn the truth about whether weapons collected in Libya ultimately ended in the hands of the Syrian rebels? After a year of the current approach, I think we all know the answer. The answer is no.

That is why the speaker should use this anniversary of the Benghazi attacks and the impending vote on the U.S. use of force in Syria to change course and create a House select committee which can at long last hold public hearings and issue subpoenas to get to the bottom of this. It is the only way the American people will ever learn the truth and the only way the survivors will ever receive the recognition they deserve for their heroic efforts that – my bill to create this subcommittee is – now we have 170 cosponsors: six joined in August, two called today.

We have three-quarters of the House, Republicans, super majority of the majority. It has been endorsed by family members of the Benghazi victims, the retired Special Operations community, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents the diplomatic security agents who were present in Benghazi that night, as well as the editorial page of the “Wall Street Journal” among many other endorsements.

I don’t know of any other bill that has such strong support from the House majority but is still opposed by the House leadership. I have no doubt that if this bill came to the floor, it would receive near unanimous support from Republicans, and, eventually, a number of Democrats would support it too. This is bipartisan. It puts everything on the table. They can all pick and choose who they subpoena.

The question before us today is whether the speaker will seize the opportunity after a year of failed or stalled committee investigations to change course and create this select committee to ensure that the American people learn the truth.

And, again, I want to thank Judicial Watch for putting this on.

MR. FITTON: Thank you. Thank you, Congressman Wolf, for your sobering report. And we’re going to discuss this further.

First, I'll turn it over though to Chris Farrell, who, as I said, is an expert in terrorism, has been studying, obviously, for years. Here at Judicial Watch he's focused on the Beslan attacks. He's consulted with various agencies. And we talk about whistleblowers – this is the guy that whistleblowers talk to, one of the folks, when they call Judicial Watch. So he knows more than he can tell about.

But we know a lot as a result of Chris' efforts and the diligence of his investigative team. And, obviously, the support of our litigation team because, sometimes, we find with the Obama administration – well, frankly, with any government administration, presidential administration that you have to sue to get access to basic information about what your government's up to. It's just the nature of the beast.

That being said, I'll turn it over to Chris Farrell.

CHRISTOPHER FARRELL: Thank you, Tom. And thank you, Mr. Wolf. I appreciate your comments.

Today, we finalized a report on the anniversary of the Benghazi attack, and it's titled "Unanswered Questions in the Quest for Accountability from the Obama Administration." This report first was published, the first version of this report, in January of this year. And the first part of the report, as it stands today, maintains that initial reporting and then we've supplemented it.

Before I get into the detail of it though, I want to acknowledge and thank, as Tom just did, our investigators, namely Sean Dunagan and Kate Bailey for their assistance in doing this report, our attorneys here at Judicial Watch, and all of our staff really who make this kind of work and this kind of reporting possible, because, without them, it doesn't happen, frankly.

So our new report recaps the analysis done by a recently retired diplomatic security service officer named Ray Fournier and his commentary that he gave us. That report that we produced in January of this year was based upon Mr. Fournier – based upon Ray's analysis. And his knowledge of the diplomatic security service, what was going on at the State Department was very fresh. He only retired in December. So he had weeks-old knowledge of process, procedures, standards, routines, all the mechanics of what goes on in the State Department.

That initial report we produced in January goes through the Accountability Review Board that that the State Department established and really kind of takes it apart. It disassembled the ARB reporting that Ambassador Pickering and Admiral Mullen did, and provides some very pointed questions, so pointed in fact that if you go and review the report today, none of those questions have been answered, not one.

We're months down the road from that initial report in January. We've had five or six congressional committees conduct investigations and they still haven't answered the questions from January.

So an important document because it takes apart the ARB and it does it from the standpoint of a professional diplomatic security service officer who had served as an RSO, regional security officer, in embassies – five different embassies around the world. So this is a guy who did it for a living. He knows of what he speaks. And his analysis and commentary is very important.

I'll tell you that of that – that report, when we issued it in January, we had distributed over 100,000 copies of that report, enormously popular with Judicial Watch members and with other organizations that really had an interest in, you know, what does a real professional say? What's an insider's review of what the ARB did or didn't do?

Part two, which is what we published today, what we finalized today – and part two of our report goes through a few different areas. I'll just touch on them briefly.

The first is about really what's a deliberate campaign of lies by the Obama administration concerning the YouTube video. There's no other way to describe the administration's position concerning representations made by Ambassador Rice and others about this ridiculous YouTube excuse. There were painful, excruciating explanations provided by the administration with contradictions, and reversals, and finger pointing. And it was really shameful, really a shameful performance. And, of course, eventually, they were forced to admit that, yes, it actually was terrorism. It wasn't inspired by YouTube.

That entire story collapsed. The scary thing is though it collapsed without consequence, without consequence. The administration essentially walked away from that string of lies that ran from September 12th, or actually even the 11th, but the 12th principally, all the way through September 28th. The president of the United States stood up in front of the U.N. General Assembly on September 26th and repeated the same lie about the YouTube video. Nobody bats an eye. Nobody cares. It's extraordinary.

Along those lines is really a lack of accountability, which is the second section of the report. You know, the four officials who were suspended from the State Department just three weeks ago were reappointed by now Secretary Kerry. So the four officials who were kind of hung out to dry and pointed at and said, you guys did wrong, you didn't do your job, you didn't prepare, you didn't follow through, you didn't respond, those four officials have spent essentially the last year on paid administrative leave. That doesn't sound like much of a consequence, much of a punishment or any sort of censure, does it? So those folks, thanks to Secretary Kerry have all been – have been reappointed and they're back on the job. Again, no accountability, none.

We've done a detailed chronology – I'd say an exhaustive chronology. We've gone into a number of different resources, news sites and other information sites, and really called out and compiled the most comprehensive chronology that I know of concerning Benghazi, both before, during and after the attack. We also made sure to include details that various news agencies prefer to airbrush out of the story.

For example – I’m not picking on one particular news network – but if you go and look at that particular chronology, you’ll see that the word martyrs is sometimes erased from 17th of February Martyrs Brigade. That organization, the 17th of February Martyrs Brigade was the subcontractor to a British firm called – I can’t think of the firm right now – nonetheless, a British firm who conducted the security for our –

MR. FITTON: Blue Mountain.

MR. FARRELL: Blue Mountain. That’s correct. Blue Mountain group. Blue Mountain group is a British firm who subcontracted to 17th of February Martyrs Brigade. Folks don’t realize, don’t appreciate that those guards at our embassy or at the special mission camp out in Benghazi were unarmed. People would think that guards would have armed, particularly in that environment, protecting a special mission compound. A requirement of the contract is that they be unarmed due to cultural sensitivity in the area. It’s pretty remarkable stuff. So we’ve included details, like the use of the word “martyrs,” where it’s appropriate, and we have not airbrushed out details like that.

And then there’s a whole section on loose ends and answered questions. And the problem there is, where do you stop? I commented to Tom via e-mail a couple of days ago, I said, I could just keep going, but at a certain point, we have to just kind of draw the line and say, enough is enough.

So we highlighted some unanswered questions, things like the only person that’s been arrested concerning this entire event in Benghazi is the poor slob who made the video that went YouTube, that kind of sloppy spoof video that made fun of Mohammed, the controversial video that everyone kept pointing to. The only person in jail is him, none of the terrorists, none of the folks involved in failing to protect our citizens, just the guy who made the video. That’s quite telling, I think.

Media members have been able to grab and interview Khattala, one of the guys who was pointed at as being instrumental in leading the attack on the consulate. It took three weeks for the FBI to get into the country. Why? Colonel Bristol, a United State Marine Corps officer assigned in Stuttgart, Germany, as a rapid reaction special operations force in theater to respond to these sorts of things, he wasn’t made available for weeks. Suddenly, he was made available. But when he was, it was only in classified hearings. I’m sure he has something to say. No public comment.

And then, really, the big question. Why was Ambassador Stevens even there? What was he doing in Benghazi? Why that day? Why that time? What purpose?

The next section of our report is entitled “What Difference Does It Make,” as infamously asked by then Secretary Clinton, an extraordinarily arrogant thing for her to say in front of Congress, in front of the Senators who were questioning her, and really a shameful cowering. I don’t know the man personally, but Senator Johnson just was beaten into submission. She barked and bellowed about how – what difference does it

make. And Senator Johnson simply backed down. You didn't hear anybody follow up. No one said, well, it does make a difference, and, yes, she will answer the question. There was no follow-up. Senators act like whipped puppies. It's extraordinary. There's no accountability.

So this shameful cowering – I mean, here's perspective. If you ask what difference does it make, then also ask, as Congressman Wolf just talked about, why are people signing non-disclosure agreements and being polygraphed? What difference does it make? OK. Well, then why the NDAs and why the polygraphs? Align those two thoughts. You can't.

So there are some questions that do make a difference. Congressman Wolf's questions are excellent. We've included them in our report as well. There's five congressional committees. All have failed, essentially. They've all done their little bit and asked their string of questions, but they're essentially disjointed and uncoordinated in their inquiries. And there's a problem in that once the press conferences and the television sound bites are over, the American public is left with little or no meaningful follow through. And so a single select committee, as Congressman Wolf has suggested, with the power of subpoena and the ability to take sworn depositions, would make quite a difference.

I'm going to close with those comments, just reminding folks that it's your obligation as citizens, as it's our obligation as Judicial Watch really to demand accountability, and to be persistent, and to never forget. And if you do those three things, we might eventually get to an answer. Thank you.

MR. FITTON: Thank you, Chris Farrell. You know, just to provide additional context, the president was running for reelection with the campaign slogan, as Joe Biden famously said, bin Laden is dead, GM is alive. And there was this attack in Benghazi. They knew immediately it was by al Qaeda elements, yet they repeatedly lied, as Ambassador Rice did famously on all five television Sunday talk shows shortly thereafter. Hillary Clinton lied. Mr. Obama lied by omission and misdirection, all to protect their presidential campaign from having to deal with an al Qaeda attack in the middle of the campaign.

So we have the lies as being one scandal, and then, in retrospect, we see the lack of preparation and the concern about lack of security in Benghazi that should have been there that wasn't, and the run around that was done to set up a compound that did not have the proper security. We know that was a scandal as well. And it's still an open question as to whether there's adequate security in other similar situated compounds where the State Department or the CIA or U.S. representatives are conducting business in dangerous places.

And, of course, there's the aftermath of Benghazi, what happened in the hours after the attack? Why wasn't there support? Why after almost a nearly full day were our CIA men held out to dry in that separate attack that took place after the attack on the

initial consulate? You have to remember there were hours and hours that passed before the second wave of attacks. And no force was brought to bear of anything substantive to protect those men. And those lies certainly, at least the second set of lies, the two Navy SEALs, I don't think how you come – can draw any conclusion other than they could have at least been saved but for military action that if it had been launched immediately by the president.

But none of those questions have been answered. None of those questions have been answered. And Congressman Wolf and Judicial Watch, and I know there's a coalition of other groups who are working with, are demanding answers. And this is something where the leadership is out of touch, both the press leadership, the media leadership, our political leadership. But the grassroots wants answers.

Joining us today – or who wanted to join us today was Charles Woods, who was the father of Navy SEAL Ty Woods who was killed in Benghazi that day. And he asked me to read the following statement: "It's been almost a year since my son, Ty Woods, sacrificed his life defending 30 Americans at the Benghazi consulate. After one year, we still do not have the answers.

For that reason, as the father of a Navy SEAL who loved and died for America, I support Congressman Frank Wolf's resolution to have a bipartisan committee and will use subpoena powers and whistleblower protection.

Over 160 patriotic congressmen have signed their names encouraging Speaker Boehner to form this committee. The only person blocking formation of this committee is John Boehner, who has the authority to sit this committee today. Now is the time for the public to strongly encourage Speaker John Boehner to do the right thing and authorize the bipartisan committee made up of both Republicans and Democrats." And the statement signs, "Sincerely, Charles Woods, father of Navy SEAL Ty Woods".

And, with that, I'll turn over – I will segue into a question for you, Congressman Wolf. Why is the House leadership opposed to this? I don't understand what skin they have in the game here. One speculation is that some of the leadership would have been briefed as to what was going on at Benghazi and they're not terribly interested in exposing what was going on either because they know what went on and they don't want to cause any more trouble than it's been caused as a result of the attack.

REP. WOLF: I don't know the answer to the question. The speaker has said that he believes that we should do regular order, and if we reached a certain point that that didn't work, he would look at this. Clearly, I think we have reached a point because none of the questions that you have asked, others have asked, and none of the families are satisfied, and so I think we have to get a select committee or we will never know. We will have failed. We will have failed on our watch.

But I don't know. You know, I think Mr. Boehner is a good man. I'm not one – I don't go after, I don't criticize people personally, you know, but I don't know the answer.

But now I think we have reached the threshold now based on what the speaker had told me that it is now time to have a select committee.

There are – there are so many things – I mean, there is – a gentleman called our office today. Dan spoke to him. He's been in touch. He's in touch with a lot of the people. He tells us that the Navy SEAL said there that they got the call at – the first call came and they were told to stand down by the CIA station chief. And had they gone on the first call, they believe they would have saved the ambassador and Sean Smith. They got a second call to go and they were told to stand down. And they did stand down. They got a third call to go, and they said, we're going to go. And they went. But they believe had they gone on the first time – also, nobody's asking that question.

The plane we were told that picked up the wounded was not an American plane. It was a Libyan plane. Somebody said it may even have been a Libyan plane. It was commandeered, but here are your wounded, Ubben's been out there for a year now and we don't even send a plane for them. And then, the plane that picked up the 30 CIA employees that were on the tarmac, hours after the fighting, was also a Libyan plane. It was not an American plane.

You have Incirlik. You have the base in Turkey. You have the one in – yeah, in Italy. You have the team that was up in Croatia. And even, if you noticed, General Ham – and I'm disappointed in General Ham. General Ham, who people say was removed from AFRICOM, was in the – (inaudible) – the whole night, and he said – and he said this at a gathering in Aspen, where you had to pay \$1,200 a ticket to get in, he said, well, I thought maybe I had a hostage rescue situation on my hands, so, therefore, I didn't send somebody. The hostage situation in Iran went on for 400 days. And the attack on the annex hadn't even begun but didn't even send an American plane to take the wounded out. But as to why, I don't know.

But I'm hopeful that Mr. Boehner, having had the opportunity to be out among the American people over the August break, will say, I think we've now reached the threshold. It is now time for a select committee.

MR. FITTON: This question is for both of you. Are you surprised – I guess I'm not surprised, but is isn't it interesting how the opposition to the Syria intervention, I mean, in my view, the subtext is Libya, and Benghazi, and no more Benghazis. And, yet, there's little public discussion at least in the public debate about this part, barring, frankly, your talk today where you made some news in that regard.

To me, this is an unprecedented opposition to – of military action by – proposed by a U.S. president. This is – I'm not aware of any significant opposition to the type of attack that's being prepared or being offered here. There's no precedent for the opposition, in my view. Yet, Benghazi and Libya, the reason is – for this unprecedented opposition is Benghazi and Libya. Do you think that's the case or am I overstating the relationship?

REP. WOLF: I think that's a portion of the case. It's not the complete case. I think there's a certain war weariness. There's a certain – we remember, in Iraq, we were told by the head of the CIA that it was a slam dunk. We were also told – you know, I remember Colin Powell testified at the U.N.

But I think the Benghazi, the lack of reaction on Benghazi, where four Americans were killed – General Boykin, who you may have had over – General Boykin, who approached us early on the select committee, who was a commander of forces at Mogadishu, Black Hawk down – if you've seen the movie "Black Hawk Down" – he said this violated the ethos of the American military to leave anyone behind. He actually said that they took casualties at Mogadishu waiting to bring bodies back, people who had already been killed, but no one would be left behind.

So I think there is a direct causal connection to the reluctance of the Congress to see because of the whole failure of the administration to come forward on the Benghazi thing. And the contrast is, here you had four Americans killed, several seriously wounded, others wounded not as seriously but still wounded.

The contrast is Hillary Clinton is now getting \$250,000 a speech. Leon Panetta has signed a \$3 million book deal. Susan Rice, who is a national security adviser, who, as you said, went on five TV shows and said it was the video – and it's the point, the only guy who goes to jail is the guy who made it – is now the national security adviser who's coming up to advise the Congress on the whole Syria thing. So, yeah, I think there is a connection.

MR. FITTON: Well, and the Benghazi movie starring Hillary Clinton that's going to come out I'm sure eventually, Chris, are they going to talk about the Syria connection and what your research shows may have been going on there?

MR. FARRELL: I think the underlying story really is that this is the Obama administration's failed sort of knockoff version of Iran-Contra. And, as Mr. Wolf alluded to earlier, what you have is an arm smuggling operation out of Libya going into arm – and this is the sentence they don't want to hear on television – the Obama administration is arming al Qaeda, and that's what's occurring on Libyan freighters docking at Turkish ports and transshipping arms into Syria.

And, one way or another, they're arming various groups, some of whom are either al Qaeda or al Qaeda affiliated. And they've done this in a very creative way, just like Iran-Contra was done very creatively, where then, a national security counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, now CIA director, was making creative use of Title 10 and Title 50 to use JSOC, the Joint Special Operations Command, and its affiliated intelligence support activities really to run a gun running operation.

And however creative and full of initiative that may have been and very carefully skirting congressional oversight, the chickens have come home for roost and these efforts to go after bad guys in Libya and get guns back and then kind of recycle them over to

Syria literally blew up in their face. And in order to kind of paste over this all and keep moving and change the subject, you very desperately need to go and attack Syria in some capacity because it changes the channel and it shifts the conversation.

But my take is amplifying what Mr. Wolf said earlier, and it's a Libyan-based gun running operation that has gone array and had all sorts of unintended consequences. And, of course, we only know a fraction of the story, right? There's a whole other sort of alternative universe out there of guys in the intelligence and military worlds doing good things that they should do. And that's kind of the problem that we create.

We've got very brave, very smart guys in the intelligence world, in the armed forces, who we ask to do nearly impossible things – and, sometimes, the impossible as well – and their answer nine times out of 10 is, yes, sir. And they do it, which is pretty amazing. And, for the most part, the American public doesn't know about it, but every once in a while, we get to see a little fissure or a seam or a split. And I think that's what we've seen here. And then, you start pulling on the string and it gets politically embarrassing. And then, various characters run for the tall grass. And Hillary Clinton gets paid, you know, speaking fees, and people are left in hospitals to heal. Those are sort of the consequences, a lot of them unintended, but that's what happens.

MR. FITTON: Well, I don't think we have enough time to give any questions a fair – a fair response so I'll – Congressman, I'll let you close out. And can you give us any timeline of upcoming dates and action items we need to be concerned about as move here? Obviously, the Benghazi week, the anniversary week is – you know, is being subsumed in many ways by other events, but that always happens. There's always something competing with important issues and that these are issues that we think ought to be important in the news. So what are the things we need to be looking for? What timeframes are we talking about, and some next action steps?

REP. WOLF: Well, we're going to continue to do “dear colleague” letters. There are some other things that are pending that we're not saying until we find out, where, as we find things out, we do – I think we have probably set a record for “dear colleagues” in the House. I think we're making some people mad actually.

MR. FITTON: “Dear colleague” letters are –

REP. WOLF: “Dear colleague” letters are letters you send to other members asking them to cosponsor the bill and telling them, just telling them something. We've had a call from a couple saying – you know, Mr. Wolf, you're sending too many dear colleague letters out, you know. But this is truth and I think we want to – we're going to continue to do that.

And groups like yours and others have really – you know, you all have really done the heavy lift because if it hadn't been for the grassroots contacting members, a lot of members would not be on. They're busy. They're doing other things.

So we added two today – three. We added three, three today. So, you know, they're coming back and as they hear and all. And so there is – we're not going to stop. I'm going to keep doing this and doing this until this Congress, you know, runs out of steam and denies or picks it up.

I've also said that I'm not interested in serving on a select committee. You know, I'm not trying to, you know, do something. I'll be part of it, I would hope. And I'm happy if Darrell Issa is the chairman of it, or Mike Rogers is the chairman, or Ed – I don't have any favorites. They're all good people. They're all my friends.

But I think you need – and one of you said it, you need a unified coordinated effort. And failure to have that, because the administration can tell this committee one thing, this committee another thing and – you know, you have to have one staff director and you also – you have to prep for the hearings so that they were asking in these hearings and they avoid it, you can't have a five minute clock to say, five minutes, it's going to end. Then you have to be able to come back again with a question and come back again. And then, if I failed, you can come in, and whereby the members are briefed and really coordinated. They have the questions and they're able to follow up.

By having a select committee, you're not limited to these five minutes. Issa served on a committee that the member used to bring a little five-minute hourglass. And they'd go like this in a hearing, and they would go like this. Well, the witness will look at the hourglass and know, if I keep talking and I take you up to your five minutes, it's over. And so you can't have five minutes. It may take a half an hour to bear in.

And some members will specify on what took place at the annex. Others will take what took place at the consulate. Others will take what weapons, where are they? So there isn't any deadline. We're just going to continue to push.

And for all of you, Judicial Watch and others, and all who have been helpful, I am very, very grateful because I think you have made the difference.

MR. FITTON: Well, thank you. We appreciate your leadership. So those of you on the Internet and here, obviously, a key step would be to encourage your member of Congress to support Congressman Wolf's efforts. It's H. Res. 36, right?

REP. WOLF: Right. Correct.

MR. FITTON: And there's another – is there a discharge petition associated with it?

REP. WOLF: There is, but the discharge petition is not going to – I appreciate your reference, but there's been a history of members not signing petitions. So why do we want to go all the way back to three when we are at 171 now?

MR. FITTON: On the bill, on the basic bill.

REP. WOLF: That's it. And we get to 200, it can – I mean, Mr. Boehner will have to say, I think this is an idea that has come.

MR. FITTON: It's like the rain. You can't do anything about it. It's going to happen. Right.

Well, thank you again, Congressman Wolf for your leadership on this important issue and thank you, Chris Farrell of Judicial Watch. And thank you all who are attending and on the Internet.

And we'll be keeping you updated on the Benghazi scandal as events warrant. You can learn more about Frank Wolf's efforts at his website at house.gov/wolf?

REP. WOLF: Wolf dot. Dot Wolf. Yes.

MR. FITTON: And at Judicial Watch at Judicialwatch.org. Thank you very much again for your time this afternoon.

REP. WOLF: Thank you very much. (Applause.) Thank you.

(END)