

RELEASE IN FULL

September 13, 2012

USG Outreach and Engagement Post Benghazi Attack¹**1. Domestic Religious/Community Group Statements and Actions**

- **Arab and Muslim American Groups.** NSS/GE, WH/OPE, and State (NEA, DRL, OIC) reached out to numerous community contacts resulting in a number of positive statements including from nearly all major Muslim American groups. Copies of the statements are attached in the accompanying document. **Next Steps:** We need to leverage these statements for overseas communication and follow-up with key issuing organizations to encourage additional actions and possible press appearances.
- **Statements from other Faith and Ethnic Communities.**
 - WH/OPE helped mobilize the domestic faith community after the Benghazi attacks. Groups from the World Evangelical Alliance, the American Baptist Churches, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and many others issued positive statements. NSS/GE reached out to the Sikh and Pakistani American communities, who also issued positive statements. Copies of the statements are attached in the accompanying document. **Next Steps:** same as above.
 - State DRL, IRF, and the AAL for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook reached out to approximately 35 domestic Muslim and Christian organizations with whom they have regular contact, including the Coptic Christian community in the United States. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Hannah Rosenthal and team spoke with domestic Jewish groups. DRL continued to reach out to international human rights activists and organizations, including Coptic activists and others in Egypt. State encouraged the groups to condemn the attack that killed Ambassador Stevens and others in Libya in the strongest possible terms.
 - **Interfaith Press Conference.** Following DNSA McDonough's call, WH/OPE and Special Envoy to the OIC Rashad Hussain further engaged Imam Magid (Islamic Society of North America), who held a press conference with Rabbi David Sapperstein (Union for Reform Judaism), Reverend Weldon Gaddy (Interfaith Alliance), and Ambassador Aujali of Libya. After making statements condemning the both the violence and the video, these and other leaders spoke to foreign press, including in Arabic and Dari. State/PA recorded these interviews. The footage was subsequently distributed to our Embassies overseas and also sent via satellite directly to media in Muslim majority countries.

2. Diplomatic Outreach

- **Following Special Envoy Hussain's engagement, the OIC issued a strong statement condemning the film and the attacks.** Special Envoy Hussain also spoke with the Saudi Ambassador to communicate the importance of a constructive response from the Kingdom, which is home to Islam's two holiest mosques.
- **NSS/Europe engaged the Turkish government, which issued a statement condemning the violence.** A number of other countries have issued condemnations.

¹ This document specifically captures USG efforts to engage outside voices to encourage public statements that (1) denounce the attack and/or (2) make it clear that the anti-Muslim film does not reflect American. This list does not capture the totality of the USG's engagement and public affairs efforts following the attack in Benghazi.

3. **Speech on International Religious Freedom.** DNSA McDonough spoke to Conference of Catholic Bishops at Catholic University of America where he commended positive state from CCB and urged other faith leaders to speak out against hateful and divisive messages.
4. **Congressional Outreach.** Representative Keith Ellison issued a strong statement and a YouTube video. **Next Step:** both these items need to be disseminated overseas.
5. **International Religious/Community Leader Engagement**
 - Special Envoy Hussain engaged Shaykh Hamza Yusuf (US) and Shaykh Abudullah Binbayyah (Mauritania) who condemned the violence and are working on responses. Both leaders have strong connections throughout the Muslim World, with whom they are engaging.
 - NSS/GE and State PD officers in NEA, SCA, and EUR discussed steps PD officers at posts can take to engage local religious and community contacts. NSS/GE has provided State talking points to support this engagement. **Next Steps:** State PD officers will engage overseas contacts to encourage issuance of positive statements and media appearances.
 - Embassy Kabul and ISAF released a joint statement tailored to the Afghan audience that called for calm and reiterated our commitment to tolerance along with our condemnation of all violence.
6. **State Department Eid Reception.** On September 13, Secretary Clinton and a few guests will speak at the previously scheduled Eid event. State/PA will interview selected guests, encouraging them to make positive statements that can be used overseas.
7. **State Department Public Diplomacy Efforts**
 - State/PA is sending out an ALDAC with the text of the Secretary's remarks for their use and amplification, which addresses religious tolerance: "Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior, along with the protest that took place at our Embassy in Cairo yesterday, as a response to inflammatory material posted on the internet. America's commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. But let me be clear – there is no justification for this, none. Violence like this is no way to honor religion or faith. And as long as there are those who would take innocent life in the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace."
 - CSCC's digital outreach team has done 18 engagements. All of them have been on the events in Benghazi and have relied in their entirety on the President's remarks, the Secretary's remarks and the condolences by the President of Libya. These are: Arabic: 4 engagements; Somali: 6 engagements; Urdu: 8 engagements.
 - State is also pushing out video footage in highly politicized, often anti-American sites and is looking for additional footage that may amplify our desired message (for example, there are stories of supposed solidarity marches in Libya in support of our murdered folks but State hasn't seen any actual footage which could be used or that confirms that they have already occurred) and that could be used in new video messaging as appropriate.