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U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

October 29, 2012

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I noted with interest your interview with Kyle Clark on October 26th, in which you stated, in reference to whether or not any requests for help from U.S. personnel under attack in Benghazi were denied, "Well, we are finding out exactly what happened. I can tell you, as I've said over the last couple of months since this happened, *the minute I found out what was happening, I gave three very clear directives. Number one, make sure that we are securing our personnel and doing whatever we need to.*" (Emphasis added.) Although this response did not specifically answer the reporter's question, your first directive would appear to involve potential actions by the U.S. military. Since you personally provided this directive, I have a series of additional questions that I am confident you can answer in advance of the conclusion of any formal investigation.

There appears to be a discrepancy between your directive and the actions taken by the Department of Defense. As we are painfully aware, despite the fact that the military had resources in the area, the military did not deploy any assets to secure U.S. personnel in Benghazi during the hours the consulate and the annex were under attack. I find it implausible that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commander of U.S. Africa Command, and the Commander of U.S. European Command would have ignored a direct order from the Commander in Chief. Therefore, could you please clarify:

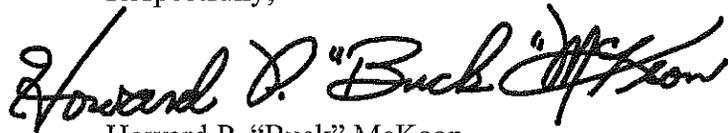
- To whom did you issue this first directive and how was this directive communicated to the military and other agencies – verbally or in writing?
- At any time on September 11, 2012, did you specifically direct the military to move available assets into Libya to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel in Benghazi? If so, which assets did you order to Libya?

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- At any time on September 11, 2012, other than ISR assets, did you provide the authority for the military to take any and all necessary measures to secure U.S. personnel, including specifically the authority to enter Libyan airspace?
- Did you have any communication with the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or any Commanders of regional Combatant Commands regarding military support to U.S. personnel in Benghazi on September 11th? If so, could you please describe any recommendations provided to you regarding available military support and any orders you gave to them?

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. Members of the Committee on Armed Services are keenly concerned that any breakdown in communication that may have occurred not be repeated. Given your stated interest in transparency and sharing all relevant information with the American people and the families of our fallen, I am hopeful you can promptly address these questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Howard P. 'Buck' McKeon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman