

Testimony of Mark Sullivan

Chairman, The Independent Panel on Best Practices

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

“Reviews of the Benghazi Attack and Unanswered Questions”

Thursday, September 19th, 2013

9:30 AM in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building (RHOB)

Good morning Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings and all the Members of this Committee. Thank you for asking Todd Keil and I to appear here today.

The shootings at the Navy Yard, which occurred this week in our nation’s Capital reminds us of the vulnerabilities and diversified threats we face every day, whether it be in our own backyard or on foreign soil. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families and loved ones.

In an environment where uncertainty permeates, one certainty we share is the necessary collaborative effort that is needed in our country to ensure the safety and security of all American lives. It is also a necessary certainty that we honor and protect the memories of those citizens who have been lost as a result of violent attacks with dignity and respect.

As a federal agent for almost thirty-five years, my life has been and continues to be dedicated to contributing to improving America’s security. From May 2006 – February 2013, I had the honor of serving as Director of the United States Secret Service (USSS) under both Presidents Bush and Obama. As Director, I learned and understood the importance of having clear lines of authority in an organizational structure concerning security matters. I have also learned that

things don't always go as planned, and when they don't it is vital to implement lessons learned in an effort to prevent them from happening again.

Mr. Chairman, I consider it an honor to have served with the Panel Members, Todd Keil, Richard Manlove, Raymond Mislock, Jr., Timothy Murphy; and Staff, Erika Lichliter and Stephanie Murdoch. Our Panel shares a combined experience of almost 170 years of security and law enforcement expertise. The Panel's report reflects the independent views of the Panel, based upon the members' best professional judgment, experience and analysis of best practices informed by interviews, travel and research. It was a pleasure to serve with the other Panel Members and I appreciate their professionalism and hard work. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the hundreds of people interviewed in the course of drafting this report from the U.S. Government, private sector, international organizations and foreign governments.

The Best Practices Panel was the result of The Accountability Review Board (ARB) for Benghazi, which recommended that the Department of State establish a Panel of outside independent experts with experience in high-risk, high threat areas to support the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, identify best practices from other agencies and countries, and regularly evaluate United States security platforms in high risk, high threat posts. Our report provides forty recommendations in twelve different areas.

In the Panel's opinion, these recommendations – if adopted and implemented – will further strengthen the Department's ability to protect its personnel and work more safely on a global platform to achieve American foreign policy goals and objectives.

The twelve areas of the recommendations are:

- 1) Organization and Management;
- 2) Accountability;
- 3) Risk Management;
- 4) Program Criticality and Acceptable Risk;
- 5) Planning and Logistics;
- 6) Lessons Learned;
- 7) Training and Human Resources;
- 8) Intelligence, Threat Analysis, and Security Assessments;
- 9) Programs, Resources and Technology;
- 10) Host Nations and Guard Forces Capability Enhancement;
- 11) Regular Reevaluation; and
- 12) Change Management – Leadership, Communications and Training.

The Best Practices Panel looked across a wide spectrum of private, government and non-governmental organizations to identify effective measures to enhance the Department's ability to ensure a safe and secure environment for employees and programs. Not surprisingly, the Panel found that many institutions – including governments – refer to Diplomatic Security as the “Gold Standard” for security and seek to model their services after Diplomatic Security. Nevertheless, any organization must continuously evolve and improve to adjust with a fluid and dynamic environment. The Panel's view was that its recommendations should be realistic, achievable and measureable. The findings and recommendations of the ARB, as well as the recommendations

of other Department of State reports and management studies, were reviewed in the context of the Panel's own independent assessment and observations of the Department's security-related operations. Best practices were then identified to address shortcomings and provide mechanisms for further consideration by the Department.

Among the most important of the recommendations is the creation of an Under Secretary for Diplomatic Security. It should be noted that this structural recommendation is not new and was suggested in an earlier report fourteen-years ago following the East Africa Embassy bombings.

The way forward should be characterized by cooperative efforts that can provide a framework which will enhance the Department's ability to protect Americans. To be effective, we must be innovative so that we insure institutions adapt and evolve to meet changing security requirements and needs.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of State, in particular overseas posts that hosted Panel visits and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, for the outstanding support provided to the Panel during our endeavor.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to any questions you might have.



Mark Sullivan- Chairman

Mark Sullivan was a Federal Agent for almost 35 years with 29.5 years as a Secret Service Agent. From May 2006- February 2013 he was the Agency's 22nd Director.

Prior to being appointed Director, he held several leadership positions including Deputy Director and Assistant Director for Protective Operations. As Assistant Director for Protective Operations he was responsible for the protection of the President, Vice President, their families, former Presidents and their spouses, other national leaders, and Visiting Heads of State. He was also responsible for the planning and implementation of security for National Special Security Events.

Upon retirement, he became a partner at Global Securities and Intelligence Strategies, Washington, DC, specializing in threat assessments, risk management, cyber security, investigations and major event and venue security.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
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Name: MARK SULLIVAN

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None

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None

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:

Mark Sullivan

Date:

9/17/13