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Issa doubles down, said State Department concerns ‘crap’

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As top Democrats piled on accusations that his actions last week were reckless and placed innocent lives in danger, House Oversight Committee Chairman **Darrell Issa** (R-CA) defended his release of sensitive State Department documents containing the names of Libyans cooperating with the U.S. government Sunday.

On Friday, *The Cable* [reported that](#) administration officials were livid that Issa had dumped over 100 pages of sensitive but unclassified State Department communications on his website, inside which were the names of several Libyan nationals who have been working with the United States. Issa's release included the names of a female human rights activist, an infrastructure project leader, and two local militia commanders who have been in contact with U.S. diplomats in Libya, exposing them to retaliation from anti-U.S. forces there, administration officials said.

In public statements and on the Sunday talk shows, a wide range of Democratic lawmakers, officials, and Obama campaign surrogates criticized Issa for releasing the documents without even checking with the State Department and offering diplomats the chance to suggest redactions that could protect sensitive relationships with Libyans on the ground. Issa critics included Sen. **John Kerry** (D-MA), Sen. **Dick Durbin** (D-IL), Sen. **Carl Levin** (D-MI), Rep. **Steny Hoyer** (D-MD), **Rahm Emanuel**, and Obama Senior Advisor **David Axelrod**.

"The wholesale release of State Department documents by the House Oversight Committee has exposed Libyan nationals working with the United States to possible danger. This is irresponsible and inexcusable, and perhaps worst of all it was entirely avoidable. It is profoundly against America's interests in a difficult region," Kerry said in a statement "I don't say casually that this release of sensitive materials was a moment of real incompetence and irresponsibility. ... It's bad enough that it's becoming a political sideshow presumably driven by the calendar of Monday's upcoming presidential debate, but even worse is that in their rush to make news they've exposed Libyans who were working side by side with America."

"While I don't see how Congressman Issa's obvious attempts to make political hay out of this tragedy will succeed in advancing his partisan goals, what is clear is that the reckless release of the names of Libyans who have worked with us could jeopardize the lives of those individuals and damage U.S. interests," said Levin.

Issa's Democratic counterpart Rep. **Elijah Cummings** (D-MD) released parts of a transcript of Issa's interviews Oct. 9 with State Department officials, during which Issa called State Department concerns about sensitive information "crap."

"Congress doesn't recognize and will not recognize 'for official use only,' 'sensitive.' Those are not classified. We would note it, but we would continue," Issa said, according to the released transcript. "Anything below Secret is in fact just a name on a piece of paper. And I think it is important to understand that. So if you have seen papers that say 'for official use only,' 'State Department sensitive,' that is crap."

Cummings also released an Oct. 9 letter from the State Department to Issa which stated, "classified and other sensitive information, including information about the security of U.S. diplomatic missions overseas, foreign government information, and personal privacy information, the unauthorized release of which could cause damage to national security and foreign relations."

Late Sunday, Issa issued a new press release defending his actions and stating that one of the Libyan sources in the document, a human rights activist, had already been publicly associated with the State Department.

"The Libyan rights activist who was highlighted by the Obama administration in news accounts as having not been, 'publicly associated with the U.S.' until the Oversight Committee released documents had actually been brought to the U.S. in December 2011 by the State Department and her trip is highlighted on the Internet," Issa said, referring directly to *The Cable*'s report. "President Obama should be ashamed of yet another

example where his administration has been caught trying to mislead the American people about what happened in Libya."

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