

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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October 25, 2017

The Honorable Daniel R. Coats
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director Coats:

On October 4, 2017, four U.S. service members died and two more were severely injured during an operation in Niger.¹ These are the first combat-related American deaths in the course of the U.S. Special Forces training and assistance to the Nigerien armed forces.² Nearly three weeks after the attack, many questions remain regarding the purpose of the operation, the circumstances surrounding the ambush, and the military response to the tragedy.

The Committee has a history of investigating certain deaths of U.S. servicemen killed in the line of duty, in addition to the Committee on Armed Services and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.³ The Committee plays a unique role in conducting interagency oversight in the House, and has jurisdiction over management of government operations generally and intergovernmental affairs.

I request that you provide a briefing regarding the Niger attack to all Committee Members as soon as possible. Please allow ample time for questions from Members during this briefing. I am sending similar requests to the Department of Defense and the White House. Please contact Valerie Shen of my staff at (202) 225-5051 by 5:00 p.m. tomorrow to schedule this briefing.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

¹ *3 Special Forces Troops Killed and 2 Are Wounded in an Ambush in Niger*, New York Times (Oct. 4, 2017) (online at www.nytimes.com/2017/10/04/world/africa/special-forces-killed-niger.html).

² *Id.*

³ See, e.g. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Misleading Information From the Battlefield: The Tillman and Lynch Episodes*, 110th Cong. (2007-2008) (H. Rept. No. 110-858) (online at www.congress.gov/congressional-report/110th-congress/house-report/858/1), and House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Hearing on Benghazi: Exposing Failure and Recognizing Courage*, 113th Cong. (2013).

Sincerely,



Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable William "Mac" Thornberry, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services

The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services

The Honorable Devin Nunes, Chairman, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

The Honorable Adam Schiff, Ranking Member Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence